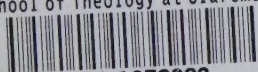


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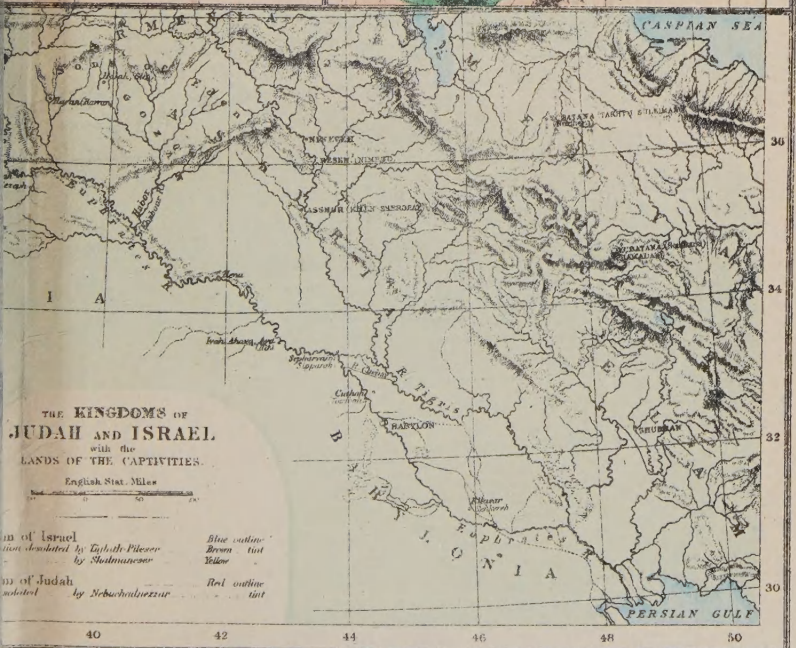















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# P R E F A C E.

BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE present volume is the fourth (though the second issued) of a projected Commentary on the Old Testament, to consist of eight volumes, uniform with the Commentary on the New Testament, which is now being published at our Book Rooms. The purpose is to exclude all matter but Commentary proper, and thereby to bring a large amount of exegesis into such compass that the complete work may be purchased at a reasonable sum. The best results of biblical investigation, ancient and modern, down to the latest dates, will be presented. Sufficient maps and illustrations are to be furnished. While the work will, we trust, be acceptable to Ministers and Scholars, such simplicity and clearness will be preserved that the whole will be available for Popular Use. The arrangements now made with some of our best Biblical Scholars, who are engaged in the work, are such that none need hesitate to purchase a single volume or more from any apprehension that there will be any failure to complete the entire set.

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE.

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As the present volume covers seven Canonical Books of the Old Testament, it was found expedient, in order to bring the Comments on so large a portion of Scripture within the limits of a single volume, to omit the Scripture text of the Books of Chronicles. This was deemed the more allowable since a thorough treatment of the Books of Kings in the same volume rendered a corresponding fulness in Chronicles unnecessary.

Besides many of the works mentioned in our Preface to the preceding volume, the principal exegetical helps and literature to which the present volume is indebted, and the editions to which direct references are made, are the following:—

BÄHR on the Books of Kings in Lange's Bibelwerk, translated by HARWOOD and SUMNER. New York, 1872. ZÖCKLER. Die Bücher der Chronik. Leipsic, 1874. (The last named, the eighth part in the German of the same Bibelwerk, came to hand too late to be of much service to us.)

JOSEPHUS. Opera Omnia, Ed. Oberthür, 3 vols. Greek and Latin. Leipsic, 1782–1785.

KEIL. Commentary on the Book of Kings, translated by J. MURPHY. Edinburgh, 1857. Also by the same author, Commentary on Kings, translated by JAMES MARTIN, (1872;) on Chronicles, translated by ANDREW HARPER, (1872;) and on Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, translated by SOPHIA TAYLOR, (1873;)—forming a part of KEIL and DELITZSCH'S "Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament," in Clark's "Foreign Theological Library." Edinburgh.

MAURER. Commentarius Grammaticus Criticus in Vetns Testamentum. Leipsic, 1835.

RAWLINSON. "The Five Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World." 3 vols. New York, 1871. "The History of Herodotus, English Version, with copious Notes, etc." 4 vols. New York, 1859. "Historical Evidences of the Truth of the Scripture Records stated Anew;" being the Bampton Lecture for 1859. The "Speaker's Commentary," on Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. New York, 1873.

THENIUS on Kings, and BERTHEAU on Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, in the "Kurzgefasstes Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament." Leipsic.

TYRWHITT Esther and Ahasuerus. 2 vols. London, 1868.

The Polyglots of WALTON, and of STIER and THEILE, have been used throughout the entire work, and whenever the ancient versions furnish various readings or additions of special interest and value to the reader, the facts have been duly noted in our comments.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF KINGS

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## Name and Historical Value.

THE Books of Kings, so called from their being a record of the kings of Israel and Judah, form a direct continuation of the Books of Samuel, and bring the history of the Hebrew Monarchy down to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. The division into two Books was first made by the Septuagint translators, and was followed in the Vulgate; and the two parts were commonly called the *Third* and *Fourth* Books of *Kingdoms*, or, of *Kings*, the Books of Samuel forming the *First* and *Second*. This division of either work into two parts is altogether needless and arbitrary, and in Kings awkwardly separates the continuous narrative of Ahaziah's reign and Elijah's life into different books.

The history contained in these books covers a period of about four hundred and fifty years; and, aside from its religious and theocratic lessons, is invaluable for the facts it has preserved from oblivion. "Considering the conciseness of the narrative and the simplicity of the style, the amount of knowledge which these books convey of the character, conduct, and manners of kings and people during so long a period is truly wonderful. The insight they give us into the aspect of Judah and Jerusalem, both natural and artificial—into the religious, military, and civil institutions of the people, their arts and manufactures, the state of education and learning among them, their resources, commerce, exploits, alliances, the causes of their decadence, and, finally, of their ruin—is most clear, interesting, and instructive. In a few brief sentences we acquire more accurate knowledge of the affairs of Egypt, Tyre, Syria, Assyria, Babylon, and other neighbouring nations, than had been preserved to us in all the other remains of antiquity up to the recent discoveries in hieroglyphical and cuneiform monuments."—HERVEY, SMITH's *Bible Dictionary*.

## Unity and Design.

Though the materials of which these books are compiled are professedly drawn from various sources, there is a manifest unity of form and purpose throughout the entire work. There is a noticeable uni-

formity of language and expression, and a constant repetition of standing formulas; such as, one "slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father," (1 Kings xi, 43; xiv, 31; xv, 8, 24; xxii, 50; 2 Kings viii, 24; xii, 21; xv, 7, 38; xvi, 20,) varied, of course, at times to meet particular facts. 1 Kings xvi, 6, 28; 2 Kings xiii, 9; xiv, 29; xxi, 18. Compare also the forms describing the general character of a king's reign; as, he "did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord;" or, "he did evil in the sight of the Lord;" these expressions being often made more definite by comparison with the deeds "of David his father," or "of Jeroboam the son of Nebat," who "made Israel to sin." 1 Kings xv, 11, 26, 34; xvi, 19, 26; 2 Kings iii, 2, 3; x, 29; xii, 2; xiii, 2; xiv, 3; xv, 3; xvii, 2; xviii, 3; xxii, 2; xxiii, 32. Noticeable, also, is the writer's almost invariable habit of giving, at the beginning of the history of every king, the age at which he "began to reign," and the number of years he reigned. 1 Kings xiv, 21; xv, 10, 25; xvi, 29; xxii, 42, 51; 2 Kings xiii, 10; xiv, 2; xv, 2, etc.

The grand design of this history is theocratic. The author aims to show how the covenant people prospered and triumphed by obedience and devotion to Jehovah, and suffered by departing from his law. That which was to exhibit the Hebrew nation as Jehovah's chosen and peculiar people was devotion to the great commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" and our historian clearly shows that disobeying this commandment was the fruitful source of all the woes of Israel and Judah. At the same time he aims to show that notwithstanding all the backsliding and idolatry of the Israelitish people, Jehovah still remained true to his promise to David, to establish his house and throne forever, (2 Sam. vii, 12-16,) and to preserve a light always before him in his chosen city Jerusalem. 1 Kings xi, 36. Hence we have the full record of Adonijah's failure to usurp the throne promised to Solomon, (1 Kings i;) then the accession and brilliant reign of Solomon, during which the temple was built, and Jerusalem fully consecrated as the chosen seat of the Divine worship, (1 Kings ii-x;) then the sins of the great king and the judgments that began at once to follow, (1 Kings xi,) culminating in the division of the kingdom. Chap. xii. Then follows the double history of the divided kingdom, until Israel, utterly corrupted and ruined by idolatry, fell before the Assyrian power, and the kingdom of the ten tribes ceased to exist. 1 Kings xii; 2 Kings i-xvii. Still a scion of the house of David reigned in Jerusalem. The efforts of Athaliah to destroy all the royal seed proved a failure. 2 Kings xi. For more than a hundred years after the fall of the northern kingdom Judah still stood; and when, at last, "the sins of Manasseh," which had gone beyond all possibility of

pardon, and Jehovah's holiness required the exile of even David's seed, the author is careful to show that Jehoiachin, the last legitimate and regular successor of David, (see note on 2 Kings xxiv, 8,) was taken to Babylon, and, after many years of imprisonment, was again elevated and treated with royal honours even in the land of his exile. Thus, so far as our historian was able to write the history of the chosen people, Jehovah was true to his covenant, and to the hopes and promises which David sang: "Great deliverance giveth he to his king; and sheweth mercy to his anointed, to David, and to his seed for evermore." Psa. xviii, 50.

### Date and Authorship.

The closing chapters of the Second Book of Kings clearly show that the work must have been written after the destruction of Jerusalem and the beginning of the Babylonish exile. The account, at the conclusion of the book, of Jehoiachin's release from prison in the thirty-seventh year of his captivity, and his honourable treatment by Evil-merodach, also shows that it was written after that event, and consequently during the latter half of the exile. It is possible, indeed, that the account of Jehoiachin's release may have been appended by a later hand; but there is no need of such an assumption. In the absence of any thing inconsistent with such a conclusion, and with the support of the facts above mentioned, we may quite safely conclude that the date of the composition was about the close of Evil-merodach's short reign of two years at Babylon. There is no evidence of a later date; and the absence of any notice of the return from exile forbids the assumption that it was written after that event.

It is impossible to decide the question of authorship. The Talmud says, "Jeremiah wrote his own Book, and the Books of Kings and Lamentations," and many of the older and more recent expositors have accepted this statement. The opinion is favoured by similarity of language and expression, and the almost literal agreement of certain passages, especially 2 Kings xxiv as compared with Jer. lii. But these and other minor considerations which have been urged fail to prove that Jeremiah was the author, especially when we consider that Jeremiah could hardly have survived the release of Jehoiachin: for that prophet was called to the prophetic office in the thirteenth year of Josiah, (Jer. i, 2,) which was sixty-six years before the release of Jehoiachin; and as he was probably thirty years old when he began his prophetic career, he would have been ninety-six at the time of Jehoiachin's release from prison. But granting him to have been only twenty at the time of his call, as some suppose, (compare Jer. i, 6,) he would still have been eighty-six at the time of Jehoiachin's release

—too old to write these prophecies. Others suppose that Ezra was the author; and Bleek suggests that it was Baruch, to whom Jeremiah dictated many of his oracles. Jer. xxxvi, 4. But these are mere conjectures, and the authorship of Kings, like that of many other Old Testament books, must remain unknown.

### Sources.

Whoever the author, and wherever he wrote, he had abundant sources of information at his command. Of these the most important were, 1.) **THE BOOK OF THE ACTS OF SOLOMON.** 1 Kings xi, 41. This work is not to be identified with either of the works mentioned in 2 Chron. ix, 29; but was probably a full and authentic history of the life and times of Solomon, composed soon after the decease of that great monarch. Keil believes that "it was a work elaborated partly from the official chronicles and other historical monographs on Solomon, and partly from prophetic notes regarding him and his relation to the Lord." 2.) **THE BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL.** 1 Kings xiv, 19. 3.) **THE BOOK OF THE CHRONICLES OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH.** Chap. xiv, 29. These last two seem to have been the public and official annals of the two kingdoms, as prepared by the scribes and recorders, and kept as national archives. Such annals were kept by the ancient Persian kings. Ezra iv, 15, 19; Esther ii, 23; vi, 1. Compare also our note on 2 Sam. viii, 16. In the kingdoms of Israel and Judah such annals would naturally contain all the important events of each king's reign, and many passing notices of prophets and other prominent persons that were in any way associated with such events. They would, therefore, be most important sources of information for any one who wished to acquaint himself with the history of the two kingdoms.

Against this plausible and most rational view of the character of these books—a view long held by the best expositors—several recent critics have raised objections. According to Keil, these "Chronicles" were not the national archives made by the successive recorders, but annals composed by prophets, and compiled partly from the public archives and partly from prophetic monographs and collections of prophecies. He supposes that they had been worked up into a "Book of the History of the Times of the Kings," for each of the two kingdoms a short time previous to the capture of Jerusalem, "and in this finished form they lay before the author of our work." This view is also accepted in substance by Bleek and Bähr. But the arguments adduced in its support are all of little weight, and rest substantially on the following objections to the older and more common view, which are easily answered:—

1.) It is urged that there is no Old Testament evidence that the *mazkir*, or "recorder," was a writer and preserver of national archives. But it may well be asked in reply, What evidence is there that he was any thing else? The word *recorder* (מִזְכִּיר) is best and most naturally explained as *historiographer*, or annalist, and other eastern kingdoms had such officers. It is every way supposable that the "Chronicles of the Kings of Israel," and "of Judah," were documents similar to the "Chronicles of the Kings of Media and Persia," (Esther x, 2,) and if the latter were national archives, why not the former also?

2.) It is assumed that wicked rulers, like Ahab and Jezebel, would not have allowed among the archives a record of all their shameful acts. But this again is an untenable assumption. The probability is, that few, if any, of the wicked kings and princes concerned themselves with what the recorders registered; and the king who was not afraid to practice idolatry would not be likely to be more afraid to have his acts recorded.

3.) It is said that the contents of the Books of Kings are of too theocratic a character to have been taken from public archives. But this is assuming that the theocratic portions of these books were transferred literally from the sources in question, which no one will maintain. Our author doubtless drew from the Chronicles of the Kings the *facts* which he records, but not the moral reflections and theocratic lessons which he makes prominent. These were his own, which he wrote as he was moved by the Holy Spirit; and let it be observed, that he refers to the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and of Judah, *not as to sources from which he had literally quoted, but as works where an interested reader might find details of facts which it was not his purpose to narrate*. In other words, we may say he refers to them more *for what he does not record* than for what he has preserved to us in these books.

4.) Finally, it is said such national archives must have perished with the destruction of Samaria and Jerusalem, and could not possibly have been within reach of a writer of the latter half of the Babylonish exile. Here, again, we have groundless assertions, to which it is sufficient to reply that such archives would have been no more likely to perish than compilations from them, and prophetic monograms, such as Keil supposes these Chronicles to have been. The same class of persons that took care to preserve the Book of the Law of Moses, and the Books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, together with the prophecies of Isaiah, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micah, and others which existed at the time, would not have been likely to overlook records of such importance as the official annals of the two kingdoms.

It is very supposable that our author sometimes made use of other works of which he makes no mention. A large amount of Hebrew

literature, historical, prophetic, and poetical, since lost, was doubtless then extant, and accessible to the writer of the Book of Kings; and to deny that he ever made use of such materials is to hazard an unwarrantable assumption.

### Contemporaneous Literature.

A very considerable portion of the extant literature of the Old Testament belongs to the period covered by the Books of Kings, and helps to throw light upon the life and customs of that period. First comes the literature of the age of Solomon, comprising the PROVERBS, SONGS OF SOLOMON, a number of the PSALMS, (xlv, lxxii, lxxxviii, lxxxix, cxxvii,) and, perhaps, ECCLESIASTES and the BOOK OF JOB. These constitute largely a body of ethical and gnomic poetry. "The reign of Solomon," says Stanley, "has sometimes been called the Augustan age of the Jewish nation. But there was this peculiarity—that Solomon was not only its Augustus, but its Aristotle. . . . With the accession of Solomon a new world of thought was opened to the Israelites. The curtain which divided them from the surrounding nations was suddenly rent asunder. The wonders of Egypt, the commerce of Tyre, the romance of Arabia—nay, it is even possible, the Homeric age of Greece—became visible."

Besides the works above mentioned, we have no other literature of importance that can be dated with any degree of probability between the age of Solomon and the latter period of the kingdom of Israel. Then arose a succession of prophets who foretold the coming judgments of Jehovah, and not only warned the kings and people against the danger of idolatry, as the various prophets from the time of Samuel had done, but also uttered various oracles against surrounding nations, and wrote the words of their prophecies in books which have been preserved to the present time. Among the earliest of these was JONAH, who flourished about the beginning of the reign of Jeroboam the son of Joash. 2 Kings xiv, 25. From the book that bears his name we find the great Assyrian Empire just then becoming known to the Israelites. Nineveh is represented as a great and wicked city, among whose inhabitants Jonah's message creates a sort of panic, and, in perfect accordance with Oriental impulsiveness, the entire population humble themselves in sackcloth and ashes. JOEL was another of the early prophets whose writings still remain. He belonged to the kingdom of Judah, and speaks often of Zion and Jerusalem. His prophecy abounds with allusions to rural and agricultural scenery, and his vision reaches to Messianic times—to the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the consequent triumphs of the Church,

During the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and of Jeroboam II. and his successors in Israel till the ruin of the northern kingdom, flourished the great prophet ISAIAH, as well as HOSEA, AMOS, MICAH, and NAHUM. Besides the book of prophecies which bears his name, ISAIAH seems to have written two historical works—one a biography of Uzziah, (2 Chron. xxvi, 22,) and the other a biography of Hezekiah. 2 Chron. xxxii, 32. These works are now lost; but probably from the latter our author took, substantially, the passage in 2 Kings xviii, 14–xx; and the parallel in Isa. xxxvi–xxxix may be regarded as a later modification of the same narrative, made by the prophet himself for the book of his prophecies. See note on 2 Kings xviii, 13.

Isaiah is the most voluminous of all the prophets, and his works are invaluable for the light they shed upon the history of his times. They abound in rebukes, threatenings, and expostulations with the people, both of Judah and Israel, but chiefly the former, on account of the prevailing idolatry and wickedness; but at the same time they contain more consolation and more Messianic prophecies than the works of any other prophet. They throw light on the history of most of the neighbouring kingdoms, and were very probably accessible to the writer of the Books of Kings. HOSEA's prophecies show up the grievous disorders and the gross impiety of the kingdom of Israel. Occasionally the sins of Judah are mentioned, but "the iniquity of Ephraim, and the wickedness of Samaria," are the great burden of his oracles; and against their fearful crimes he seems to exhaust all methods of expostulation, rebuke, and warning. To about the same period belong also the prophecies of AMOS and MICAH. The former pronounced penal judgments against the Syrians, Philistines, Phenicians, Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites, and also and especially against Judah and Israel. MICAH, also, is full of predictions of approaching judgment, and his oracles are directed against Israel and Judah, especially the latter. A little later, but belonging to the same general period, we must reckon NAHUM the Elkoshite. "We can hardly doubt," says Stanley, "that he was the last of the great series of Israelitish prophets, whether we suppose that he was among the captives in Assyria, or had taken refuge in Judah. There is something pathetic in the thought that the crash of these mighty cities—Thebes in the far south and Nineveh in the far east—is known to us only through the triumphant cry of this solitary exile. It is one sustained shout of wild exultation that the oppressor has fallen at last. The naked, discrowned corpse of the glorious city is cast out to the scorn and disgust of the world. . . . Under this doom Nineveh vanishes from view, to be no more seen till in our day the discovery of her buried remains has given new life

to the whole of this portion of sacred history, and not least to the magnificent dirge of Nahum."

More than half a century later than Nahum flourished ZEPHANIAH, HABAKKUK, and JEREMIAH. The first named wrote during the earlier part of Josiah's reign, and his prophecies consist largely of announcements of speedily approaching judgments upon Judah and various other nations. At the time of his writing Nineveh had not yet fallen. HABAKKUK seems to have uttered his prophecies about the same period; and in the near future his vision sees the rise and fearful coming of the Chaldean hosts—their horses swifter than leopards, and fiercer than wolves, and their horsemen flying like eagles upon their prey. JEREMIAH began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of Josiah, five years before the discovery of the Law in the temple and the holding of the memorable passover, and thence on for forty years, until the fall of Jerusalem, he laboured most earnestly for the welfare of Judah. During the reigns of Jehoiachin and Zedekiah he suffered severely from the kings and the ruling parties at their courts, and when Jerusalem was captured he was found a prisoner, and in chains. He had counselled submission to the Chaldeans, and thereby drew upon himself the wrath and hatred of the infatuated rulers. After the destruction of Jerusalem he was allowed to choose whether he would accompany the captives to Babylon or remain with the poor remnant that were left in the land. He chose the latter; but soon after was led, against his wish and protest, along with the panic-stricken remnant, to Egypt, where he died. His prophecies, spread over all this period, are of the first importance and value in studying the last four chapters of the Second Book of Kings. And all the above-named works compose a most precious body of literature, and aid in no small measure to the understanding of the history of the Hebrew Monarchy.

### Synchronistic World-History.

After the accession of Solomon the Hebrew people began to take a prominent place among the nations of the earth, and their subsequent history is largely involved in that of several other great nations with whom they came into contact, and by whom they were at last destroyed. No clear understanding of Israelitish history can be had without some knowledge of the synchronistic history of these great heathen powers. Rawlinson observes that the period covered by the history of the Hebrew Monarchy embraces "the transition time of most profane history—the space within which it passes from the dreamy cloudland of myth and fable into the sober region of reality and fact."—*Hist. Evidences*, p. 102. Hence both the interest and

importance of all well-authenticated events and facts which synchronize with any part of the history of Israel, especially such facts as affected the destinies of Israel.

The seven Canaanitish nations mentioned Josh. iii, 10, (where see note,) had been utterly subdued before the time of Solomon, and the small remnant of them that still existed in the land were in a state of bondage to the Israelites. 1 Kings ix, 20, 21. Also the Philistines, Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites, had been so thoroughly humiliated by the prowess of David that they were never able afterwards to affect very considerably the national position and destinies of Israel. They stood towards Israel in a state of vassalage, but occasionally would revolt and withhold their tribute, and whenever opportunity offered they stood ready to harass Judah and Israel. They often took advantage of Israel's wars with greater powers to invade their coasts and carry off captives, and sometimes they joined the greater powers in making war on Israel. In the reign of Jehoshaphat, we find the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites uniting their forces in a war against Judah, (2 Chron. xx, 22,) and also Judah and Israel uniting in a war against Moab. 2 Kings iii, 4-27. Perhaps the greatest evil Israel received from these and other contiguous nations came through the idolatrous women whom Solomon took into his harem, and who corrupted his heart and introduced their idolatry into his kingdom. 1 Kings xi, 1-8.

Especially did Israel suffer in this way from the Phenicians of Tyre and Zidon. The intercourse of David and Solomon with Hiram, king of Tyre, was of the most friendly character. The latter supplied David with timber for his house, and Solomon with material and workmen for his temple and palace; and the splendid results of Solomon's extensive commerce were largely due to the skill and help of Phenician sailors. But his Zidonian wives led Solomon's heart after Ashtoreth, (1 Kings xi, 5,) and the marriage of Ahab with Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians, was fraught with the most disastrous consequences to the kingdom of Israel. That woman, so remarkable for strength and wickedness of character, established the Baal and Asherah worship with a fearful success in her husband's realm, and in the course of years it leavened Judah also. We have no record of military hostilities between Phenicia and Israel; but in the later period of the kingdom those world-renowned traders seem to have carried on commerce in Jewish slaves, whom they probably purchased of their captors and sold to the Greeks. Joel iii, 4-8. After this the Hebrew prophets utter many oracles of doom against both Tyre and Zidon.

## EGYPT.

With Egypt the Israelitish people held various important relations, and the history of the two nations touch at several memorable points. Never could the Hebrews forget their deliverance from Egyptian bondage; but from the Exodus till the time of Solomon the two nations seem to have had no intercourse. After the conquest of southwestern Palestine, Egypt became, in that quarter, Israel's nearest and most powerful neighbour, and Solomon sought to strengthen his kingdom and enlarge his fame by an alliance with that ancient kingdom. The Pharaoh, whose daughter he took in marriage, (1 Kings iii, 1,) was probably the last king of the twenty-first dynasty. He invaded Palestine, probably at the request of Solomon, and captured Gezer, a Canaanitish city, which he at once presented to his daughter, Solomon's wife. 1 Kings ix, 16. But before Solomon's death a new dynasty (the twenty-second) obtained the throne of Egypt, and its first king, Shishak, received and entertained Jero-boam the enemy of Solomon. 1 Kings xi, 40. This act, of course, annulled the affinity between the two kingdoms, and soon after, in the fifth year of Rehoboam, Shishak invaded Judea, and carried off many of the most precious treasures of the kingdom. 1 Kings xiv, 25; 2 Chron. xii. "The record of this campaign, which still remains on the outside of the south wall of the great temple of Karnak, bears an additional interest from the name of *Yuda Melchi*, (kingdom of Judah,) first discovered by Champollion in the long list of captured districts and towns put up by Shishak to commemorate his success."—*Wilkinson*.

Some thirty years later, in the reign of Asa, Judea was invaded by "Zerah the Ethiopian," who was probably another king of this same (twenty-second) dynasty. The invader was signally defeated by the Jewish king, and his vast host pursued in ruinous disorder from the field of battle. 2 Chron. xiv, 9-13. More than two centuries pass before we meet again in Hebrew annals with any Israelitish intercourse with Egypt. Then we find Hoshea, king of Israel, plotting to throw off the Assyrian yoke by entering into a secret league with So, or Seva, an Egyptian monarch of the twenty-fifth dynasty. 2 Kings xvii, 4. This conspiracy led to the destruction of Samaria and the captivity of the ten tribes. Not long after this, in the reign of Hezekiah, we hear of Tirhakah, an Ethiopian king of the same (twenty-fifth) dynasty, marching to fight with Sennacherib and the Assyrians, who were then engaged in besieging Libnah and Jerusalem. 2 Kings xix, 8, 9. The two armies, however, came not to battle; for before Tirhakah arrived the angel of the Lord smote

the Assyrian army and caused them to retreat to Nineveh. 2 Kings xix, 35. As Hezekiah was at peace with Egypt (2 Kings xix, 21) Tirhakah did not continue his march into Palestine. About a century elapsed after this event before Egypt and Judah came into contact again. Then the great Assyrian empire had fallen, and Nabopolassar was busy in establishing himself upon the throne of Babylon. This seemed to Pharaoh-necho, a king of the twenty-sixth dynasty, a favourable opportunity to make himself master of Syria, and extend his dominion to the Euphrates. He accordingly marched with a formidable army, and was passing through the valley of Esdraelon, when Josiah, who had then reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem, led an army against him, but was defeated and slain in the first engagement. 2 Kings xxiii, 29. Necho proceeded, and established his power as far as Carchemish on the Euphrates, and, returning three months afterwards, deposed Jehoahaz, whom the people of Judah had elected king, and placed his older brother Eliakim upon the throne. 2 Kings xxiii, 30-34. Thus all Palestine and Syria were subjected, and for three years continued tributary to the king of Egypt. At the end of three years Nebuchadnezzar recaptured Carchemish and all the rest of western Asia which had so recently been conquered by Necho, "and the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land." 2 Kings xxiv, 7; Jer. xlvi, 2. Thenceforth the Babylonian empire, so long as it existed, maintained its supremacy over the whole land of Israel. Zedekiah, indeed, rebelled, and sent to Egypt for horses and soldiers, (Ezek. xvii, 15,) and while the Babylonian army besieged Jerusalem, Pharaoh-hophra sent an army against them and for a short time raised the siege. Jer. xxxvii, 5-11. But the Egyptian forces soon returned, and Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians. A poor remnant of the people were left in the land under charge of Gedaliah, but he was soon assassinated, and they arose and fled into Egypt. 2 Kings xxv, 26. Jeremiah the prophet was compelled to go with them. In his later prophecies he predicts the miserable end of those who sought that land for safety, (Jer. xlii, 18,) and of Pharaoh-hophra in whom they put their trust; (Jer. xlv, 30;) both of which predictions were fearfully fulfilled.

#### SYRIA.

The Syrians of Damascus occupy a prominent place in the wars of Israel and Judah. The whole of Syria was subdued by David, and its numerous petty kings reduced to vassalage, and during Solomon's reign they remained tributary to the kingdom of Israel. One important exception, however, was the case of Rezon, or Hezion, a

subject of Hadadezer king of Zobah, who gathered a military force around him, and established himself as king of Damascus, where he founded a dynasty which continued through several generations. He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon. 1 Kings xi, 25. He was succeeded by his son Tabrimon, who formed a league with Israel and Judah. 1 Kings xv, 19. The next king was Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, who broke his league with Israel and joined with Asa, king of Judah, in a war against Baasha, king of Israel, (1 Kings xv, 17-22,) which resulted in the capture of many Israelitish towns. In the days of Omri there seems to have been peace between the two nations, and each king had his quarter, or "streets," in the other's capital. 1 Kings xx, 34. The influence and power of the kingdom of Damascus under Benhadad is seen more fully in the history of Ahab's reign, when, with thirty-two confederate kings and a countless multitude of people, with horses and chariots, he went up and besieged Samaria. The Syrians were repulsed with great slaughter, but the following year they renewed the war again. They were again defeated, and Benhadad was forced to make a treaty of peace with Israel. 1 Kings xx. Three years later, however, war was opened between the two nations again over the possession of Ramoth-gilead, and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, joined Ahab in the battle. In this war the Syrians were victorious and Ahab was slain. Chap. xxii. After this the Syrians troubled Israel more than ever, and during the reign of Jehoram, Ahab's son, they kept up for some time a predatory warfare, and at length Benhadad again besieged Samaria. This siege was nearly fatal to Samaria, and famine had well-nigh exhausted the besieged, when deliverance was suddenly wrought by the miraculous interposition of Jehovah, who caused a panic in the Syrian host, and drove them to a precipitant flight beyond the Jordan. 2 Kings vi, vii. Benhadad was finally slain by Hazael, one of his servants, who at once usurped the throne, and during his reign perpetrated all manner of evil upon the children of Israel. 2 Kings viii, 7-15. He captured various cities of Israel, and at one time attempted to besiege Jerusalem, but was dissuaded by Jehoash, who gave him the treasures of the temple and palace to retire, and thereby became a vassal to Syria. 2 Kings xii, 18.

Hazael was succeeded by his son Benhadad, under whom the kingdom of Syria rapidly declined in power. Jehoash defeated him in three successive engagements, and made the kingdom of Damascus again tributary to Israel, as it had been in the days of David. 2 Kings xiii, 24, 25; xiv, 28. Some time after this, in the days of Ahaz, king of Judah, we find the throne of Syria occupied by one Rezin, who made an alliance with Pekah, king of Israel, and made war on the

kingdom of Judah. 2 Kings xv, 37; xvi, 5, 6; Isa. vii, 1-9. This Syro-Israelitish league and war caused the kingdom of Judah an untold amount of loss and suffering, (2 Chron. xxviii, 5, 6,) and in his extremity Ahaz formed an alliance with Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, who marched against Damascus, captured the city, slew Rezin, carried the people into exile, and thus put an end to the kingdom of Syria. 2 Kings xvi, 7-9.

#### ASSYRIA.

But the kingdom of Damascus, as a hostile power to Israel, falls and vanishes from sight only to give place to the greater power of the Assyrian empire, which at this point begins to fill so large a place in the biblical records. The Assyrian monuments represent Jehu as paying tribute to Assyria; and it is possible that as early as the reign of that usurper both Israel and Judah had formed some kind of alliance or intercourse with this great and growing empire of the East. The first Assyrian invasion recorded in our history was by Pul, and occurred during the reign of Menahem, king of Israel; but the invader was induced, by the payment of a heavy ransom, to withdraw his forces from the country. 2 Kings xv, 19, 20. The next invasion was by Tiglath-pileser, in the days of Pekah, king of Israel. At his first invasion this Assyrian monarch seems to have ravaged a large portion of Syria and Palestine; according to Rawlinson, the campaign lasted five years. Tiglath-pileser returned with a vast train of captives. 2 Kings xv, 29. His second invasion was invited by Ahaz, who sought his help to resist the combined forces of Rezin and Pekah, and his coming resulted, as we have seen, in the utter ruin of the kingdom of Damascus. 2 Kings xvi, 9. A mutilated inscription now in the British Museum confirms this account of the death of Rezin and the capture of Damascus.

The next king of Assyria was Shalmaneser, who also made two invasions of Palestine. The first was to collect his customary tribute from Hoshea, who seems to have declared his independence of Assyria. Hoshea submitted to his former vassalage without a struggle, (2 Kings xvii, 3,) but soon after he formed a secret alliance with the king of Egypt, and rebelled again against Assyria. Thereupon Shalmaneser came a second time against Samaria, besieged the city for three years, captured and imprisoned Hoshea, and put an end to the kingdom of Israel. The city was destroyed, and the people exiled to various cities of the East. 2 Kings xvii, 5, 6. Afterwards some of the depopulated Israelitish towns in the vicinity of Samaria were colonized by a mixed population from various Eastern cities. 2 Kings xvii, 24. Thus the kingdom of Israel was, like that of Damascus, destroyed by the Assyrians.

Though the siege of Samaria was begun and long carried on by Shalmaneser, it seems to have been completed by Sargon, his successor. See note on 2 Kings xvii, 6. Sargon is mentioned in Isaiah, (xx, 1,) but not in the historical books. His history, however, is amply narrated on the monuments of Assyria. He appears to have been a usurper, who took advantage of Shalmaneser's long absence to place himself on the throne, "just as in later times the pseudo-Smerdis took advantage of the absence of Cambyses in Egypt for a like purpose. He warred successively in Susiana, in Syria, on the borders of Egypt, in the tract beyond Amanus, in Melitene and Southern Armenia, in Kurdistan, in Media, and in Babylonia. During the first fifteen years of his reign, the space which his annals cover, he kept his subjects employed in a continual series of important expeditions, never giving himself, nor allowing them, a single year of repose."—*Rawlinson*.

Sargon was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, the most celebrated of all the Assyrian kings. His attempts to conquer Judah in the days of Hezekiah are amply detailed in 2 Kings xviii, 13–19, 37, and Isaiah xxxvi, xxxvii. After a reign of twenty-four years he was assassinated in the temple of his god Nisroch, and was soon after succeeded by his son Esar-haddon. 2 Kings xix, 37. "This prince," says Rawlinson, "like his father and his grandfather, was at once a great conqueror and a builder of magnificent edifices. The events of his reign have not been found in the shape of annals; but it is apparent from his historical inscriptions that he carried his arms over all Asia between the Persian Gulf, the Armenian mountains, and the Mediterranean, penetrating in some directions farther than any previous Assyrian monarch." He must have been contemporary with Manasseh, king of Judah, who is mentioned on the monuments as one who paid tribute to Esar-haddon, and therefore it was Esar-haddon's captains who "took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon." 2 Chron. xxxiii, 11. Bricks found on the site of Babylon show that this Assyrian monarch built a palace and occasionally held his court there, which is true of no other Assyrian king. According to Ezra iv, 2, Esar-haddon, as well as Sargon, colonized some of the depopulated towns of Samaria with people from the East. He was the last Assyrian king whose name occurs in the Scriptures. He was succeeded by his eldest son Asshur-bani-pal, whom the Assyrian annals represent as one of the most enterprising and powerful of the kings of Nineveh. He subdued Egypt and established his dominion as far up the Nile as Thebes. He entered Asia Minor and passed beyond the track of any former king. In other quarters he was equally successful, and during his reign the Assyrian Empire attained its broadest extent. But in his last years the whole power of the empire was shaken, and

the way for its rapid decline and ruin prepared, by a fearful inroad of Scythians from the north, who swept down in overwhelming numbers over the vast plains of western Asia, and left Assyria "but the shadow of her former self," inviting the attack of any ambitious conqueror. About this time Asshur-bani-pal died, and was succeeded by his son Asshur-emid-ilin, who seems to have been the last king of Nineveh, and is probably identical with the Saracus or Sardanapalus of the Greeks. He took the kingdom at a most difficult and dangerous crisis of its history. The Medes, a warlike nation of the upland country east of Nineveh, who had probably suffered comparatively little from the Scythian invasion, began now to contemplate the conquest of Assyria. Cyaxares, their king, at the head of a powerful army, and fully aware of the weakness of Assyria, began to invade the country from the east. Meantime Nabopolassar, a general of Saracus, who had been sent with a large force to Babylon to prevent invasion from that quarter, saw that to defend Assyria was a hopeless task, and resolved to improve his opportunity to gain royal power. He entered into secret negotiations with Cyaxares, and agreed to assist him in the siege of Nineveh on condition that he should be king of Babylon. This alliance was formed and sealed by the marriage of Nebuchadnezzar, Nabopolassar's eldest son, with Amuhia, the daughter of Cyaxares. Thereupon Cyaxares and Nabopolassar united their forces in a combined attack on Nineveh, which was unable to oppose a long resistance. In his extremity and despair the Assyrian monarch withdrew with all that belonged to him to his palace, and setting it on fire with his own hands, perished, like Zimri, (1 Kings xvi, 18,) in the flames. Thus, in fulfilment of many an inspired prophecy, the great Assyrian empire fell, after an existence of nearly a thousand years.

#### BABYLON.

Upon the fall of Nineveh nearly all that part of the Assyrian empire lying on the west and south of the Tigris seems to have fallen, by mutual agreement of the conquerors, to Nabopolassar, who was now established as king of Babylon, and with whom the later Babylonian empire began. But ages before this, and in fact ever since the original Chaldean monarchy was destroyed by the Assyrians, there had been an almost ceaseless struggle for the independence of Babylon. Most of the time the rulers at Babylon had been tributary to the Assyrian kings, but occasionally they had thrown off the yoke, and taken up arms to establish Babylonian independence. It is thought by some that Pul, who is called "king of Assyria" in 2 Kings xv, 19, was really a Chaldean ruler who had taken advantage of some temporary weakness of Assyria to proclaim his independence, and even carry his

arms into Syria and Palestine. But the most successful revolt of this kind was that of Nabonassar, who established and maintained for a long time the independence of Babylon, and having destroyed the records of his predecessors, the year of his accession became an epoch in Chaldean chronology. He was contemporary with Tiglath-pileser of Nineveh, Pekah of Israel, and Ahaz of Judah. The next king of Babylon, of whom we have any considerable notice, was Merodach-baladan, who was contemporary with Shalmaneser, Sargon, and Sennacherib, kings of Assyria, and with Hezekiah of Judah, with whom he formed an alliance. 2 Kings xx, 12. He was repeatedly driven from his throne by the kings of Assyria, who sought to restore their supremacy in that quarter, and was finally defeated and driven into exile by Sennacherib. After this, until the fall of Nineveh, Babylon seems to have been an Assyrian fief. Esar-haddon, as we have seen, built a palace and dwelt here a part of his time, and no great effort was made for the independence of Babylon, until Nabopolassar founded the new empire. Thenceforth this great monarchy rapidly rose to magnificence and power. Nabopolassar was succeeded by his son Nebuchadnezzar, the greatest of all the Babylonian kings. He not only defeated Necho and drove him out of western Asia, but he destroyed Jerusalem and the kingdom of Judah, and besieged Tyre for thirteen years, until he captured, at least, a part of the city. His several campaigns against Jerusalem, its final capture and destruction, and the exile of the Jews, are amply detailed in the biblical history. Having acquired by his victories vast hosts of captives, he proceeded to utilize their labour in the construction of great public works. In his "standard inscription" he enumerates the great edifices, towers, walls, embankments, canals, reservoirs, and gardens, which he either built, finished, or repaired. "The indefatigable monarch seems," says Rawlinson, "to have either rebuilt, or at least repaired, almost every city and temple throughout the entire country. There are said to be at least a hundred sites in the tract immediately about Babylon which give evidence, by inscribed bricks bearing his legend, of the marvellous activity and energy of this king."

The Book of Daniel sheds light and interest upon the person and history of Nebuchadnezzar, and gives us a sort of inside view of his court and empire. He appears as served by most carefully selected and trained eunuchs; (chap. i, 4;) his court dignified and graced by wise men of various orders; (chap. ii, 2;) together with princes and officers of various ranks. Chap. iii, 2. His power over his subjects was perfectly absolute, his temper violent and hasty, his religious feelings variable. The interpretation by Daniel of his impressive dreams, and the miraculous deliverance of the three Hebrews from the

fiery furnace, lead him to great humiliation before the God of Daniel. In the fourth chapter he proclaims to all nations his conversion to the Most High, and his madness by which he was driven from the dwellings of men and grovelled with the beasts of the field. This remarkable event is apparently confirmed by his "Standard Inscription," in which he says, "Four years the seat of my kingdom did not rejoice my heart. In all my dominions I did not build a high place of power; the precious treasures of my kingdom I did not lay up. In Babylon, buildings for myself and the honour of my kingdom I did not lay out." The king, however, recovered from his malady, and his last days were as brilliant as his first. According to Berosus and the canon of Ptolemy he reigned forty-three years.

Evil-merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, was the next king of Babylon. He released Jehoiachin from prison, and treated him with royal courtesy. 2 Kings xxv, 27. After a reign of two years he was assassinated by Neriglissar, his brother in law, who is called Nergal-sharezer by Jeremiah. Chap. xxxix, 3, 13. This prince obtained the throne and reigned four years. Laboro-soarchod, his son, a mere boy, succeeded him, but after a few months was deposed, and so insignificant was his reign that he is not mentioned in Ptolemy's canon. Thus ended the dynasty of Nabopolassar.

A certain Nabonadius was thereupon invested with the sovereignty of Babylon. He was not related to the late dynasty, but proceeded at once to form such a relation by marriage with a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. Of this union Belshazzar was born, and, according to an inscription on a cylinder discovered at Mugheir, was in early life associated with his father Nabonadius in the government of the city and empire. Soon after his enthronement Nabonadius entered into a league with Lydia and Egypt to resist the rising power of the Persians, who under Cyrus were then beginning a career of conquest. But Cyrus was every-where victorious, and some years after his defeat of Cræsus, king of Lydia, and the establishment of his power in that region, the great Persian began to contemplate the conquest of Babylon. So completely was this great city walled and defended that Cyrus despaired of taking it otherwise than by stratagem. Accordingly he withdrew a part of his forces some distance up the Euphrates, and set them to digging a canal to deflect the waters from their regular channel, and when all preparations were made, he wisely waited the arrival of a certain feast of the Babylonians, when they would be less watchful and given over to revelling. Under cover of night the waters were drawn off through the new-made canal, and the Medo-Persian army entered the city through the river-bed, thus rendered fordable; and while the population were given over to drinking and revelling, they made themselves masters of

the city, massacred numbers of the inhabitants, who were unprepared to make any resistance, broke into the palace, and slew Belshazzar while he was engaged in impious revelry with a thousand of his lords. Dan. v. Nabonadius was not in the city on that fatal night, but in the neighbouring town of Borsippa, whither he had been driven with a body of troops sometime before. After the capture of Babylon he saw that further resistance was useless, and wisely surrendered to Cyrus, who magnanimously conferred upon him the province of Carmania. JOSEPHUS, *Apion*, i, 20. Thus ended the Babylonian empire.

Our history embraces a period of four hundred and fifty-four years, extending from 1015 to 561 B. C. We follow the common chronology, (that of Usher,) and furnish an Index which presents in concise and convenient tabular form the dates of the principal events, the synchronisms of the different reigns and of the contemporaneous history of nations that came in contact with Judah and Israel. The chronology of these books is in the main very clearly detailed. The historian is usually careful to designate the year in which each king began to reign, and the number of years he reigned; and in the conjoint history of Israel and Judah there is such a system of cross-references that the different dates verify each other. But there are some dates given which cannot be reconciled, and we are left to harmonize the conflicting texts by conjectural emendations; for example, note on 2 Kings xv, 1, 8. Sometimes it is necessary to assume an interregnum. It is to be hoped that Assyrian and Egyptian researches will yet settle some of the disputed epochs of history, but the results of these researches are at present too uncertain to be received as final and authoritative. Usher's scheme adheres closely to the biblical data, and for that reason has obtained a general and long-continued acceptance.

### Chronological Index,

COVERING THE PERIOD FROM B. C. 1015 TO B. C. 561.

B. C.	KINGDOM OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.	Year of reign.	SYNCHRONISTIC HISTORY.
1015	DAVID'S Death.....	40th	Psusennes is king of Egypt; Hiram, of Tyre.
1014	SOLOMON'S Accession.		
1010	Foundation of temple laid.....	4th	Marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, and negotiations with Hiram.
1008	Temple finished and dedicated.....	11th	
1002	Palace commenced.....	12th	Rezon establishes himself at Damascus, and, assisted by Hadad, the Edomite, acts as an adversary toward Solomon.
980	Palace completed.....	25th	
976	Solomon's death.....	40th	
975	Accession of REHOBOAM, and secession of the Ten Tribes.		

B. C.	KINGS OF JUDAH.	Year of reign.	Length of reign.	KINGS OF ISRAEL.	Year of reign.	Length of reign.	SYNCHRONISTIC HISTORY.
975	REHOBOAM.....	.....	17	JEROBOAM.....	.....	22	Shishak invades Judah.
970	do.....	5th	..	.....	.....	.....	
957	ABIJAM.....	.....	8	do.....	18th	.....	
955	ASA.....	.....	41	do.....	20th	.....	Benhadad of Syria leagues with Asa, wars against Baasha, and captures numerous cities of Israel. Zerah, the Ethiopian, wars with Asa.
953	do.....	2d	..	NADAB.....	.....	2	
952	do.....	3d	..	BAASHA.....	.....	24	
930	do.....	26th	..	ELAH.....	.....	2	Interregnum and anarchy in Israel.
929	do.....	.....	..	ZIMRI, TIBNI.....	.....	.....	
925	do.....	31st	..	OMRI.....	.....	12	
918	do.....	38th	..	AHAB.....	.....	22	Wars between Syria and Israel.
914	JEHOSHAPHAT.....	.....	25	.....	4th	.....	Ethbaal in Tyre.
897	do.....	17th	..	AHAZIAH.....	.....	2	War with Mesha, king of Moab. Naaman the Syrian healed of leprosy.
896	do.....	18th	..	JEHORAM.....	.....	12	
892	JEHORAM associated with his father.	.....	3	.....	.....	.....	
889	JEHORAM, sole king.	.....	5	.....	.....	.....	Edomites and other neighbouring tribes trouble Judah.
885	AHAZIAH.....	.....	1	.....	11th	.....	Hazeal usurps the throne of Damascus, and wars with Israel and Judah.
884	ATHALIAH.....	.....	6	JEHU.....	.....	28	
877	JEHOASH.....	.....	40	do.....	7th	.....	
855	do.....	23d	..	JEHOAHAZ.....	.....	17	Hazeal and his son Benhadad oppress Israel, but are thrice smitten by Jehoash.
840	do.....	37th	..	JEHOASH.....	.....	16	
839	AMAZIAH.....	.....	29	do.....	2d	.....	Amaziah wars with Edom, and captures Selah.
824	do.....	15th	..	JEROBOAM II.....	.....	52	Damascus and Hamath subdued, and made subject to Israel.
810	AZARIAH or UZZIAH.....	.....	52	do..... [See note on 2 Kin. xv, 1.]	15th	Note on 2 Kings xv, 8.	
772	do.....	38th	..	ZACHARIAH.....	.....	6 mo.	Pul takes tribute of Israel.
772	do.....	39th	..	SHALUM.....	.....	1 mo.	
772	do.....	39th	..	MENAHEN.....	.....	10	
762	do.....	50th	..	PEKAHIAH.....	.....	2	Rezin, of Syria, and Pekah conspire against Judah.
760	do.....	52d	..	PEKAH.....	.....	20	
758	JOTHAM.....	.....	16	do.....	2d	.....	
742	AHAZ.....	.....	16	do.....	17th	.....	Tiglath-pileser takes Damascus, and destroys the Syrian power.
738	AHAZ.....	4th	..	PEKAH assassinated. Interregnum of 8 years.	.....	.....	
730	do.....	12th	.....	HOSHEA.....	.....	9	Shalmaneser invades Israel.
726	HEZEKIAH.....	.....	29	do.....	3d	.....	Hoshea leagues with So, of Egypt.
721	do.....	6th	.....	do.....	9th	.....	Shalmaneser and Sargon destroy the kingdom of the ten tribes.

B. C.	KINGS OF JUDAH.	Year of reign.	Length of reign.	SYNCHRONISTIC HISTORY.
721	HEZEKIAH.....	6th	23	Sargon, king of Assyria.
718	do .....	14th	.....	Sennacherib invades Judah and besieges Lachish.
711	do .....	16th	.....	Merodach-baladan's embassy to Hezekiah.
				Rab-shakeb sent against Jerusalem. Tirhakah of Egypt marches against the Assyrians. Angel smites the Assyrian camp.
698	MANASSEH .....	.....	55	Esar-haddon's captains carry Manasseh to Babylon.
648	AMON .....	.....	2	
641	JOSIAH.....	.....	31	Fall of the Assyrian Empire.
610	do .....	31st	.....	Necho conquers Western Asia and slays Josiah.
610	JEHOIAHAZ.....	.....	3 mo.	Nabopolassar, king of Babylon.
610	JEHOIACHIN.....	.....	11	
	do.....	4th	.....	Nebuchadnezzar defeats Necho, retakes Carchemish, and invades Palestine.
599	JEHOIACHIN.....	.....	3 mo.	Nebuchadnezzar again invades Judah, and carries the flower of the nation into captivity.
599	ZEDEKIAH.....	.....	11	Hophra, king of Egypt.
590	do.....	9th	.....	Zedekiah leagues with Hophra and others, and revolts.
588	do.....	11th	.....	Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem, is intercepted by Hophra, but returns and destroys the city, and burns the temple.
561	JEHOIACHIN released from prison.	.....	.....	Evil-merodach, king of Babylon.

## Contents.

The Contents of the Books of Kings are divisible into three sections or periods. The first embraces the history of Solomon's reign; the second the conjoint history of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah; and the third the history of Judah from the fall of Samaria to the Babylonish exile. These Contents should be perused with an eye to what has been said on page 6 on the Unity and Design of this history. While the spirit and aim of both Kings and Chronicles is noticeably Theocratic, the latter work, on comparison with Kings, will be found to be more Ecclesiastical, or Levitical. A comparison of the Contents of both works will show that while Chronicles affords no history of the northern kingdom, Kings gives that history in even greater fulness than it does the parallel history of Judah. The writer of Chronicles prepared his work under a ruling conviction that the highest interests and destiny of the chosen people were bound up with the sacred service and the temple, and hence he dwells so extensively on the functions and orders of the Levites, and the history of the temple service. The writer of Kings aimed rather to give a summary of what was most interesting in the entire *political* history of all Israel. Compare on these points the Introduction to the Books of Chronicles. The following Table of Contents will serve as a convenient Index:—

SECTION FIRST.

History of Solomon, 1 Kings i-xi.

David's Old Age.....	i, 1-4	Solomon's Negotiations with Hiram....	v, 1-12
Adonijah's Usurpation.....	i, 5-10	Labourers at Lebanon.....	v, 13-18
Solomon made King.....	i, 11-40	Description of the Temple.....	vi, 1-38
Adonijah's Alarm.....	i, 41-53	Solomon's Palace.....	vii, 1-12
David's Dying Charge and Death.....	ii, 1-11	The Metal Work and Vessels of the Temple.....	vii, 13-51
Fall of Adonijah.....	ii, 12-25	Dedication of the Temple.....	viii, 1-66
Deposition of Abiathar.....	ii, 26, 27	The Lord's Second Appearance to Solomon.....	ix, 1-9
Death of Joab.....	ii, 28-35	Sundry Notices of Solomon's Acts.....	ix, 10-23
Death of Shimei.....	ii, 36-46	Visit of Queen of Sheba to Solomon....	x, 1-12
Solomon's Affinity with Egypt.....	iii, 1	Solomon's vast Revenues.....	x, 14-29
Stat. of Religion at the Beginning of Solomon's Reign.....	iii, 2, 3	The Sins of Solomon.....	xi, 1-8
Solomon's Wise Choice.....	iii, 4-15	The Lord's Anger against Solomon....	xi, 9-13
Solomon's Judicial Sagacity.....	iii, 16-28	Solomon's Adversaries.....	xi, 14-40
Solomon's Officials.....	iv, 1-19	Close of Solomon's History.....	xi, 41-43
Solomon's Wealth and Wisdom.....	iv, 20-34		

SECTION SECOND.

Conjoint History of the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah, 1 Kings xii xxii, and 2 Kings i-xvii.

I. KINGS.

Revolt of the Ten Tribes.....	xii, 1-19
Jeroboam made King of Israel, and Rehoboam's vain Attempt to subdue the Rebellion.....	xii, 20-24
Jeroboam's Works and Idolatry.....	xii, 25-33
The Mysterious Prophet of Judah.....	xiii, 1-34
Ahijah's Second Prophecy.....	xiv, 1-13
Close of Jeroboam's Reign.....	xiv, 19, 20
Rehoboam's Evil Reign, and Shishak's Invasion.....	xiv, 21-31
Abijah's Reign.....	xv, 1-8
Asa's Reign.....	xv, 9-24
Nadab's Reign.....	xv, 25, 26
Baasha's Reign.....	xv, 27-34; xvi, 1-7
Elah's Reign.....	xvi, 8-14
Zimri's Reign.....	xvi, 15-20
Interregnum of Four Years.....	xvi, 21, 22
Omri's Reign.....	xvi, 23-28
Beginning of Ahab's Reign.....	xvi, 29-34
Elijah the Tishbite.....	xvii, 1-24
Elijah's Meeting with Ahab, and Contest with the False Prophets.....	xviii, 1-40
The Great Storm.....	xviii, 41-46
Elijah's Flight to Horeb.....	xix, 1-13
Call of Elisha.....	xix, 19-21
Benhadad's Wars with Ahab.....	xx, 1-34
Ahab's Reproof.....	xx, 35-43
Naboth's Shameful Execution.....	xxi, 1-16
Elijah's Prophecy against Ahab.....	xxi, 17-29
Syrian Wars and Ahab's Death.....	xxii, 1-40
Jehoshaphat's Reign.....	xxii, 41-50
Beginning of Ahaziah's Reign.....	xxii, 51-53

II. KINGS.

Ahaziah's Sickness, and Reproof by Elijah.....	i, 1-8
Elijah calls Fire from Heaven.....	i, 9-16
Death of Ahaziah.....	i, 17, 18
Elijah's Ascension.....	ii, 1-18
Elisha Heals the Waters of Jericho.....	ii, 19-22
The Mocking Children Cursed.....	ii, 23-25
Beginning of Jehoram's Reign.....	iii, 1-3
War with Mesha, King of Moab.....	iii, 4-27

The Widow's Oil Multiplied.....	iv, 1-7
Elisha and the Shunammite Woman.....	iv, 8-37
The Poisonous Pottage Healed.....	iv, 38-41
Miraculous Feeding of a Hundred Men.....	iv, 42-44
The Leprosy of Naaman Cleansed.....	v, 1-19
Gehazi's Curse.....	v, 20-27
The Lost Axe-head Recovered.....	vi, 1-7
Syrians Smitten with Blindness.....	vi, 8-23
The Siege of Samaria, and the Great Famine Suddenly Ended.....	vi, 24-vii, 1, 20
The Shunammite Woman again.....	viii, 1-6
Hazael made King of Syria.....	viii, 7-15
Reign of Jehoram.....	viii, 16-24
Ahaziah's Reign.....	viii, 25-29
Jehu Anointed King of Israel.....	ix, 1-13
Death of Jehoram.....	ix, 14-26
Death of Ahaziah.....	ix, 27-29
The Fate of Jezebel.....	ix, 30-37
Slaughter of Ahab's Sons.....	x, 1-11
Slaughter of Ahaziah's Brethren and Ahab's Adherents in Samaria.....	x, 12-17
Slaughter of the Baal-worshippers.....	x, 18-33
Jehu's Sins, Misfortune, and Death.....	x, 34-36
Athaliah's Usurpation.....	xi, 1-3
Fall of Athaliah, and Elevation of Joash to the Throne.....	xi, 4-21
Reign of Joash, King of Judah.....	xii, 1-21
Reign of Jehoahaz, King of Israel.....	xiii, 1-9
Reign of Joash, son of Jehoahaz, King of Israel.....	xiii, 10-13
Sickness, Death, Burial of Elisha.....	xiii, 14-21
Deliverance from Syrian Oppression.....	xiii, 22-25
Reign of Amaziah, King of Judah.....	xiv, 1-22
Reign of Jeroboam, Son of Joash.....	xiv, 23-29
Reign of Azariah, King of Judah.....	xv, 1-7
Reign of Zachariah, King of Israel.....	xv, 8-12
Shallum's Rule.....	xv, 13-15
Reign of Menahem.....	xv, 16-22
Reign of Pekahiah.....	xv, 23-26
Reign of Pekah.....	xv, 27-31
Reign of Jotham, King of Judah.....	xv, 32-38
Reign of Ahaz, King of Judah.....	xvi, 1-20
Reign of Hoshea, and Fall of the Kingdom of Israel.....	xvii, 1-23
Origin of the Samaritans.....	xvii, 24-41

## SECTION THIRD.

**History of Judah from the Fall of the Kingdom of Israel to the Babylonian Captivity, 2 Kings xviii-xxv.**

Beginning of Hezekiah's Reign.....	xviii, 1-8	Reign of Amon.....	xxi, 19-26
Fall of the Kingdom of Israel.....	xviii, 9-12	Introduction to Josiah's Reign.....	xxii, 1, 2
Sennacherib's Invasion of Judah....	xviii, 13-16	Preparations to Repair the Temple...	xxii, 8-7
Rabshakeh's Message to Hezekiah. xviii,	17-37	Discovery of the Book of the Law... xxii,	8-11
Hezekiah's Grief; Message to Isaiah..	xix, 1-5	Oracle of Huldah the Prophetess... xxii,	12-20
Isaiah's Reply.....	xix, 6, 7	Great Reformation under Josiah....	xxiii, 1-25
Sennacherib's Second Message.....	xix, 8-13	Conclusion of Josiah's History....	xxiii, 26-30
Hezekiah's Prayer.....	xix, 14-19	Reign of Jehoahaz.....	xxiii, 31-35
Isaiah's Oracle.....	xix, 20-34	Reign of Jehoiakim.....	xxiii, 36-xxiv, 7
Calamity and Retreat of the Assyrians,	and Sennacherib's Death... xix, 35-37	Jehoiachin's Reign, and First Great	
Hezekiah's Sickness and Recovery....	xx, 1-7	Deportation of Exiles to Babylon xxiv,	8-17
The Sign on the Dial of Ahaz.....	xx, 8-11	Zedekiah's Reign.....	xxiv, 18-xxv, 7
Babylonian Embassy, and Prophecy		Destruction of the Temple, and of the	
of the Babylonian Captivity.....	xx, 12-19	Kingdom of Judah.....	xxv, 8-21
Conclusion of Hezekiah's Reign. ...	xx, 20, 21	Appointment and Assassination of	
Reign of Manasseh.....	xxi, 1-18	Gedaliah.....	xxv, 22-26
		Release of Jehoiachin from Prison.	xxv, 27-30



REMAINS OF AN ANCIENT ARCH AT JERUSALEM.

## FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS.

## CHAPTER I.

**N**OW king David was old *and* <sup>1</sup>stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. **2** Wherefore his servants said unto him, <sup>2</sup>Let there be sought for my lord the king <sup>3</sup>a young virgin: and let her

1 Heb. *entered into days*.—2 Heb. *Let them seek*.—3 Heb. *a damsel, a virgin*.

stand before the king, and let her <sup>4</sup>cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. **3** So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag a <sup>5</sup>Shunammite, and brought her to the king. **4** And the

4 Heb. *be a cherisher unto him*.—a Josh. 19. 18.

## SECTION FIRST.

## HISTORY OF SOLOMON.

## CHAPTERS I-XI.

## CHAPTER I.

## DAVID'S OLD AGE, 1-4.

In these introductory verses the writer prepares the way for the history that follows. The age and infirmity of David account for the ease with which Adonijah seems to usurp royal powers, and our introduction here to the fair Abishag prepares us for subsequent events in Adonijah's career. Chap. ii, 12-25.

**1. David was old**—As he was thirty years old when he began to reign, and reigned forty years, (2 Sam. v, 4,) he must now have been in his seventieth year. **Stricken in years**—Literally, as the margin, *entered into days*; far gone in days, having reached an advanced period of life. **Clothes**—Probably bedclothes are to be understood; coverlets. **He gat no heat**—Literally, *there was no heat to him*. Abundance of clothes could not restore animal heat to a decrepit system. The older expositors assign various causes for this lack of animal heat: as, an attack of some disease of a chilling nature; the loss of much blood by war and other ways; or the result of excessive labours in earlier life. But the loss of animal warmth is a common

experience of the old age of persons who have spent a life of vicissitudes and anxious toils.

**2. His servants**—Josephus calls them his *physicians*. **Let her cherish him**—Literally, *let her be to him a female nurse*. It was one part of her service to attend to his private wants, to perform the various little items of nursing expected of a familiar attendant. All this is comprehended in the word סִכְנֶת, *a female attendant*. An-

other part of her service was to lie in the king's bosom, that is, sleep with him, and thus communicate to him animal heat and vigour. This method of recruiting the wasted vigour of age is natural and well known; but while it benefits the old, it must needs take away from the strength of the young. The too common practice of young persons sleeping with aged aunts, uncles, or grandparents is the ruin of many a naturally vigorous and healthy constitution.

**3. Abishag a Shunammite**—So called from her native city Shunem, in the tribe of Issachar, the modern *Solam*, at the base of the Little Hermon. See on Josh. xix, 18. A needless controversy has been raised as to whether Abishag really became the acknowledged wife or concubine of David. In what respects she served the king is here precisely told, and all beyond this

damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.

5 Then <sup>b</sup> Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will <sup>c</sup> be king: and <sup>e</sup> he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. 6 And his father had not

<sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. 3. 4. — <sup>c</sup> 5 Heb. *reign*. — <sup>e</sup> 2 Sam. 15. 1. — <sup>f</sup> Heb. *from his days*. — <sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. 3. 3, 4; 1 Chron. 3. 2.

is fruitless speculation. The fact, however, that she slept in the king's bosom placed her virtually in the position of a concubine, so that Adonijah's subsequent effort to obtain her as his wife was construed by Solomon into an attempt to invade the royal harem, and thus establish a claim to the throne.

4. **The king knew her not**—This explicit statement, as well as all that goes before, is a sufficient vindication of David from the charge of taking a fair young concubine in his old age in order to gratify lewd passions. The whole procedure was in perfect accordance with the morals of the time. No one looked upon it as a scandal, and Bathsheba herself evidently found no fault.

ADONIJAH'S USURPATION, 5-10.

#### 5. Adonijah the son of Haggith—

The fourth son of David, born at Hebron, while his father reigned over Judah only. 2 Sam. iii, 4, 5. **Exalted himself**—Became puffed up with a proud ambition, and urged his right and title to the kingdom. He was now the oldest living child of David, for Amnon and Absalom had perished, and Chileab seems to have been also dead, for we have no mention of him after his birth; so Adonijah could justly plead the rights of primogeniture. But the kingdom of Israel had not yet attained established usages as to regnal succession; and as Jehovah designated both Saul and David to the royal honours, and lifted them from obscurity to the highest position in the nation, so also he designated Solomon as David's successor on the throne. 1 Chron. xxii, 9, 10; xxviii, 5, 6. In the face of this Divine interposition, how vain must be Adonijah's ambition! **He prepared him chariots**—Affected royal dignity, as the rebellious Absalom had done be-

fore him. 2 Sam. xv, 1. His action was all the more culpable from the fact that a full knowledge of Absalom's miserable end did not deter him from following in his steps.

<sup>7</sup> Heb. *his words were with Joab*. — <sup>e</sup> 2 Sam. 20. 25. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 2. 22, 28. — <sup>8</sup> Heb. *helped after Adonijah*.

fore him. 2 Sam. xv, 1. His action was all the more culpable from the fact that a full knowledge of Absalom's miserable end did not deter him from following in his steps.

6. **His father had not displeased him**—By attempting to correct his youthful follies and ambitious actions. Here was one of David's weaknesses. His parental tenderness ran away with his judgment, and caused him many sorrows. **At any time**—כִּימֵי,

*from his days*; that is, from Adonijah's days. All his life David had allowed him to have his own way. Schmidt, Keil, and others understand "from his days" to refer to the days of Adonijah's ambitious movements to attain the throne; but if that were the meaning, the phrase in question would seem entirely superfluous. **A very goodly man**—That is, good-looking. Like Absalom his brother, whose beauty was praised in all the gates of Israel. 2 Sam. xiv, 25. **His mother bare him after Absalom**—His mother Haggith bore him after Maacah had borne Absalom.

7. **He conferred with Joab**—Joab doubtless felt that he had lost the favour of David, (compare 2 Sam. xix, 13,) but hoped to continue captain of the host if his help raised Adonijah to the throne, and therefore readily entered into the conspiracy. **And with Abiathar**—To many it has seemed strange that this priest, the friend of David in his wanderings, should have countenanced such conspiracy. His action probably grew out of jealousy towards Zadok, his associate in office, who received so much favour from David.

8. **Zadok**—This priest probably still officiated at Gibeon. See note on 2 Sam. vi, 17; viii, 17. **Shimei, and**

the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and <sup>a</sup>Shimei, and Rei, and <sup>a</sup>the mighty men which *belonged* to David, were not with Adonijah. **9** And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zohemoth, which <sup>a</sup>is by <sup>a</sup>Enrogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants: **10** But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

**11** Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of <sup>a</sup>Haggith doth reign, and Da-

vid our lord knoweth *it* not? **12** Now therefore come, <sup>a</sup>let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. **13** Go and get thee in unto king David, and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, <sup>a</sup>Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why then doth Adonijah reign? **14** Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and <sup>a</sup>confirm thy words. **15** And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old;

*g* Chap. 4. 18.—*h* 2 Sam. 23. 8.—*9* Or, *The well Rogel*. 2 Sam. 17. 17.—*i* 2 Sam. 3. 4.

*k* Prov. 11. 14; 20. 18; Jer. 38. 15.—*l* 1 Chron. 22. 9.—*10* Heb. *fill up*.

#### SOLOMON MADE KING, 11-40.

**11. Nathan spake unto Bathsheba**—That devout prophet had his eye upon the movements of Adonijah, and he took timely measures to frustrate his seditious projects. He was thoroughly acquainted with the private history of David's relation and pledges to Bathsheba, and was well aware that no one could have such power over the king as she whom he loved above all women.

**12. Save thine own life**—If Adonijah became king, he would doubtless, according to the barbarous custom of Oriental monarchs, destroy all persons suspected of claiming a title to the kingdom, and therefore the lives of Solomon and his mother would be in peril.

**13. Didst not thou . . . swear**—According to 1 Chron. xxii, 9, the Lord had foretold to David the birth and name and destiny of Solomon. Before his birth, then, this child of Bathsheba had been chosen of God to succeed David on the throne of Israel, and it is therefore but natural to suppose, though we find no express record of it, that in accordance with the Divine oracle, David had sworn to Bathsheba as is here stated.

**14. Confirm thy words**—Hebrew, as margin, *fill up*; that is, complete, in the same sense as fulfilling, and thereby confirming a prophecy.

**15. Into the chamber**—Into the bedchamber, where, on account of his age and infirmities, the king was obliged to keep himself.

**Rei**—This Shimei is perhaps the same with the one mentioned chap. iv, 18; but there is nothing sufficiently positive to identify either of these names with any person mentioned elsewhere.

**Were not with Adonijah**—This statement contains a tacit intimation that these mighty men of David had been approached by Adonijah, or by some of his abettors, and solicited to join the party, and help carry out the treasonable projects of that aspiring youth.

**9. Adonijah slew sheep**—"Thus also imitating Absalom, who, in order to cover his sin with the cloak of religion, and to ingratiate himself with those whom he invited to the banquet, began his rebellion with a sacrificial feast. 2 Sam. xv, 12."—*Wordsworth*. **Stone of Zohemoth**—Hebrew, *stone of the serpent*, perhaps so called from the slaughter of a serpent by it. Or, *stone of the conduit*, so called from its proximity to some conduit where water flowed. It is identified by Mr. Gauneau with a rock in the Kedron valley near to the Fountain of the Virgin, which the Arabs still call *Zehwele*. Like the stone *Ezel*, (1 Sam. xx, 19,) it was a spot familiar to the writer and his contemporaries. **Enrogel**—Probably identical with the "Fountain of the Virgin," in the valley of the Kedron. See note on Josh. xv, 7.

**10. He called not**—For he well knew that they would not favour his plans, but would rather oppose and thwart them with a power not easy to resist.

and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king. **16** And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king said, <sup>11</sup>What wouldst thou? **17** And she said unto him, My lord, <sup>12</sup>thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, *saying*, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. **18** And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest *it* not: **19** <sup>13</sup>And he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon thy servant hath he not called. **20** And thou, my lord, O king, <sup>14</sup>the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. **21** Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall <sup>15</sup>sleep with his fathers, that I and my sons Solomon shall be counted <sup>16</sup>offenders. **22** And, lo, while she yet talked with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. **23** And they told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And when he was come in before the king, <sup>17</sup>he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground. **24** And Nathan said, My lord, O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? **25** <sup>18</sup>For he is gone down this

day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and, behold, they eat and drink before him, and say, <sup>19</sup>God save king Adonijah. **26** But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called. **27** Is this thing done by my lord the king, and <sup>20</sup>thou hast not showed *it* unto thy servant, who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him? **28** Then king David answered and said, Call me Bathsheba. And she came <sup>21</sup>into the king's presence, and stood before the king. **29** And the king sware, and said, <sup>22</sup>*As* the LORD liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, **30** <sup>23</sup>Even as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. **31** Then Bathsheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, <sup>24</sup>Let my lord king David live for ever. **32** And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. **33** The king also said unto them, <sup>25</sup>Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon <sup>26</sup>mine own mule, and

<sup>11</sup> Heb. *What to thee?*—*m* Verses 13. 30.—*n* Verses 7, 8, 9, 25.—*o* 2 Chron. 20. 12; Psa. 25. 15; 123. 2.—*p* Deut. 31. 16; chap. 2. 10.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *sinner*.—*q* See on verse 16; Rom. 13. 7; 1 Pet. 2. 17.—*r* Verse 19.—*s* 1 Sam. 10. 24.

<sup>13</sup> Heb. *Let king Adonijah live*.—*t* 2 Kings 4. 27; John 15. 15.—<sup>14</sup> Heb. *before the king*.—*u* 2 Sam. 4. 9.—*v* Verse 17.—*w* Neh. 2. 3; Dan. 2. 4.—*x* 2 Sam. 20. 6.—<sup>15</sup> Heb. *which belongeth to me*. See Esth. 6. 8.

**16. Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance**—Though the wife of his fondest love, she is careful to observe the etiquette of those who appear in the royal presence. Nathan the prophet shows the same respect and reverence. Verse 23. **What wouldst thou**—There was something in the manner of her presenting herself that impressed the king that she had a request to make.

**28. Call me Bathsheba**—She had withdrawn from the king's presence at the entrance of Nathan, and, as we see from verse 32, he in turn retired when she was readmitted. This was done in accordance with the rules of court propriety, and also to avoid the appearance of mutual concert between them.

**29. Hath redeemed my soul out of all distress**—Many had been David's deliverances from danger; but here, as he reaffirms this oath before that woman with whom, and for whose sake, he had perpetrated the darkest sins of his life, we should understand a special allusion to the bitter soul-agonies which resulted from those crimes: for it was at the time of his redemption and deliverance from those agonies that Jehoviah had foretold to him the birth and destiny of Solomon. 2 Sam. xii.

**33. Mine own mule**—To ride upon the king's mule was almost equivalent to being crowned. In the Eastern mind it was an honour ever associated with that of wearing the royal apparel and the crown. Thus Mordecai re-

bring him down to <sup>v</sup>Gihon: **34** And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet <sup>a</sup>anoint him there king over Israel: and <sup>b</sup>blow ye with the trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. **35** Then ye shall come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. **36** And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said, Amen: the Lord God of my lord the king say so *too*. **37** <sup>b</sup>As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon, and <sup>c</sup>make his throne greater than the throne of my

lord king David. **38** So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, <sup>a</sup>and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. **39** And Zadok the priest took a horn of <sup>e</sup>oil out of the tabernacle, and <sup>a</sup>anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; <sup>e</sup>and all the people said, God save king Solomon. **40** And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with <sup>16</sup>pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.

<sup>v</sup> 2 Chronicles 32. 30.—<sup>a</sup> 1 Samuel 10. 1; 16. 3, 12; 2 Samuel 2. 4; 5. 3; chapter 19. 16; 2 Kings 9. 3; 11. 12.—<sup>a</sup> 2 Samuel 15. 10; 2 Kings 9. 13; 11. 14.

<sup>b</sup> Josh. 1. 5, 17; 1 Sam. 20. 13.—<sup>c</sup> Ver. 47.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. 8. 18; 23. 20-23.—<sup>e</sup> Exod. 30. 23, 25, 32; Psa. 89. 20.—<sup>f</sup> 1 Chron. 29. 22.—<sup>g</sup> 1 Sam. 10. 24.—<sup>16</sup> Or. *Aules*.

ceived the highest marks of honour the king of Persia could bestow. Esther vi, 8, 9. See cut of mules and note. 2 Sam. xiii, 29. **Gihon**—A reservoir at the head of the valley of Hinnom, about seven hundred yards north-west of the Yaffa gate of Jerusalem. Its length from east to west is about three hundred feet; its breadth about two hundred. This reservoir is, doubtless, identical with "the upper water-course of Gihon," or, more literally, "the outflow of the waters of the upper Gihon," which, according to 2 Chron. xxxii, 30, Hezekiah "brought straight down to the west side of the city of David." At the present time, when in the rainy season this reservoir becomes full, its waters are conducted by an aqueduct to the vicinity of the Yaffa gate, and so to the pool of Hezekiah within the city. It is no valid objection to this view of the Gihon here named that it is on such high ground, as regards the city of David, that it would be incorrect to speak of bringing Solomon *down* to it, or *coming up* from it after him, (verse 35,) for any locality outside the holy city might be spoken of as *down* from that place, and from whatsoever quarter an Israelite came to Jerusalem he was accustomed to speak of it as a *going up*. Besides, being situated in the basin at the head of the Hinnom valley, it was naturally called "Gihon in the valley." 2 Chronicles xxxiii, 14. The "lower pool," men-

tioned by Isaiah, (xxii, 9,) is probably the large broken reservoir still seen lower down in the same valley, and on the west side of the city, called by the Arabs *Birket es-Sultan*.

**37. Make his throne greater than the throne of . . . David**—Such words as these would have stirred up jealousy and anger in many kings; but, as Theodoret remarks, Benaiah "knew that no one having a true father's tenderness would be jealous of a child, and that it is characteristic of devoted fathers to wish their sons to appear more illustrious than themselves."

**38. Cherethites, and the Pelethites**—See note on 2 Sam. viii, 18.

**39. Oil out of the tabernacle**—The holy anointing oil described in Exod. xxx, 22-33.

**40. Pipes**—See note and cuts on 1 Sam. x, 5. **The earth rent with the sound**—A hyperbolical expression to indicate the boundless joyfulness of the people on that occasion. From many facts recorded in the last half of the Second Book of Samuel it is not difficult to infer that the closing years of David's reign were not popular in Israel. The growing infirmities of age prevented his appearing any more among the people; and though he held a large place in the nation's heart, his voluntary resignation of the crown to Solomon, who had doubtless, by reason of his many amiable qualities, already become endeared to all who knew him,

**41** And Adonijah and all the guests that *were* with him heard it as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, *Wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?* **42** And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came: and Adonijah said unto him, Come in; for *thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings.* **43** And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king. **44** And the king hath sent with him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule: **45** And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that *the city rang again.* This *is* the noise that ye have heard. **46** And also Solomon *sitteth*

on the throne of the kingdom. **47** And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord king David, saying, "God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne." And the king bowed himself upon the bed. **48** And also thus said the king, Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, which hath *given one* to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing *it.* **49** And all the *guests that were* with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. **50** And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and *caught hold on the horns of the altar.* **51** And it was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king Solomon: for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that he will not slay his servant with the sword. **52** And Solomon said, If he will show himself a worthy man, *there shall not a hair of him fall to the*

*h* Exod. 32. 17; Job 15. 21.—*i* 2 Sam. 13. 27.  
—*k* Ver. 40; 1 Sam. 4. 5; Ezra 3. 13.—*l* 1 Chron.  
29. 23.—*m* Verse 37.—*n* Gen. 47. 31.

*o* Chap. 3. 6; Psal. 132. 11, 12.—*p* Prov. 28. 1;  
Isa. 21. 4, 5; Dan. 5. 4, 6.—*q* Chap. 2. 28.—  
*r* 1 Sam. 14. 45; 2 Sam. 14. 11; Acts 27. 34.

and the enthronization of that youthful prince, were an occasion of great rejoicings throughout the royal city. It was also a matter of rejoicing that there was no violent break in the succession. David enthrones Solomon by his own proclamation, so that, as Wordsworth beautifully says, "Solomon's reign is to be regarded as a *continuation* of the reign of David his father. David's reign did not end with David's life, but it flowed on in the life of Solomon his son, for which it was a preparation. Thus the union of David and Solomon, as forming by their conjunction a typical representation of CHRIST, the king of the spiritual Zion, as a conqueror like David, and yet as the prince of peace like Solomon, is made more manifest." So in the harmony of the Divine dispensations the kingdom of Israel was continued, and is perpetuated in the more glorious kingdom of the Messiah.

#### ADONIJAH'S ALARM, 41-53.

**41. Joab heard**—The old warrior's ear is quick to catch the first signal of alarm.

**42. Jonathan the son of Abiathar**—The fleet messenger that in the time

of Absalom's rebellion had been the bearer of important tidings. See 2 Sam. xv, 27, 28, 36: xvii, 16-21. He announces his tidings most vividly, and with greatest accuracy of detail.

**50. Adonijah feared**—For he judged Solomon by himself, and had he obtained the kingdom, Solomon would doubtless speedily have been destroyed. He also knew that he was guilty of conspiracy against the lawful authority of the king, his father. **Caught hold on the horns of the altar**—The altar in the tabernacle on Zion, where Abiathar officiated, who, according to verse 7, was in sympathy with the ambitious prince, and whose friendly services Adonijah probably expected to receive. The horns of the altar were the emblems of security, and indicated the saving strength and grace of God, so that it was sacrilege to commit violence on any person who fled there for safety, unless he were guilty of the most flagrant crime. Compare Exod. xxi, 14.

**52. Show himself a worthy man**—Atone for his past misconduct by showing henceforth a thorough loyalty to Solomon. **There shall not a hair of him fall**—Thus the first official

earth: but if \* wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. **53** So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

### CHAPTER II.

**N**OW \* the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, **2** <sup>b</sup> I go the way of all the earth: \* be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; **3** And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep

<sup>s</sup> Job 15. 22: Prov. 13. 6; 21. 12.—<sup>a</sup> Gen. 47. 29; Deut. 31. 14.—<sup>b</sup> Josh. 23. 14.—<sup>c</sup> Deut. 17. 19, 20.—<sup>d</sup> Deut. 29. 9; Josh. 1. 7; 1 Chron. 22. 12, 13.—1 Or, *do wisely*, 1 Sam. 18. 5, 14, 30.

act of the new king's reign is one of magnanimity, and indicative of a gracious and peaceful rule. **If wickedness... be found in him**—Especially, any attempts upon the rights, prerogatives, or authority of the reigning king. But Adonijah's restless spirit soon led him to ruin. See chap. ii, 13-25.

### CHAPTER II.

DAVID'S DYING CHARGE TO SOLOMON,  
AND HIS DEATH, 1-11.

**2. I go the way of all the earth**—"Pale death," says Horace, "with impartial footstep knocks at the hovels of the poor and the palaces of kings." It is appointed unto man once to die, whether he be king or slave. **Be thou strong**—That is, be firm, decided, and courageous in all thy administration. Compare Josh. i, 6, 7, 9. **Show thyself a man**—Be in righteous words and deeds a royal godly man. There have been those, and royal personages too, who ill deserved the name of *men*. Better to call them ravenous beasts, or vipers. Solomon's youth may have been one reason for David's utterance of these words. He was "but a little child," (chap. iii, 7,) probably nineteen or twenty years of age; and with many turbulent elements in the nation, there was need on his part of a pre-eminently firm and manly spirit.

**3. Keep the charge of the Lord**—That is, take care of God; charge thyself with the responsibility of guarding

his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest <sup>a</sup> prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: **4** That the Lord may \* continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, "If thy children take heed to their way, to \* walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, \* there shall not <sup>2</sup> fail thee, said he, a man on the throne of Israel. **5** Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah <sup>i</sup> did to me, and what he did to

<sup>e</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 25.—<sup>f</sup> Ps. 132. 12.—<sup>g</sup> 2 Kings 20. 3.—<sup>h</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13; chap. 8. 25.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *be cut off from thee from the throne*.—<sup>i</sup> 2 Sam. 3. 39; 18. 5, 12, 14; 19. 5, 6, 7.

his name and honour. See the Divine charge to kings, in Deut. xvii, 16-20. The manner of doing this is immediately designated. **Walk in his ways**—To have the whole life in conformity to his revealed will. **Keep his statutes**—Observe them in thine own conduct, and see that they are properly respected by all thy people. *Statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies* are probably not to be sharply defined and distinguished from each other, but rather, as Keil observes, they serve to denote collectively the whole law of Moses in its various aspects and bearings on human life and conduct. **Statutes** denote more particularly those divine decrees which show the relations of right and wrong in the abstract. **Commandments** are the revealed laws which, like the decalogue, are designed to regulate the daily life. **Judgments** point rather to the rewards of human conduct as meted out by God himself, and revealed in the history of the Divine administration, all serving to impress men with the infallibility and justice of the decisions of Jehovah. **Testimonies** comprehend statutes, laws, judgments, ceremonies, every thing in the history of Israel that conveys declarations against sin and in favour of holiness.

**4. His word which he spake concerning me**—See 2 Samuel vii, 11-16, and notes there.

**5. Thou knowest... what Joab... did**—For the facts, see marginal refer

the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto <sup>k</sup>Abner the son of Ner, and unto <sup>l</sup>Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and <sup>m</sup>shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about his loins, and in his shoes that *were* on his feet. **¶** Do therefore <sup>n</sup>according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the

grave in peace. **7** But show kindness unto the sons of <sup>p</sup>Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that <sup>q</sup>eat at thy table: for so <sup>r</sup>they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. **8** And, behold, *thou hast* with thee <sup>s</sup>Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a <sup>t</sup>grievous curse in the day when I went

<sup>k</sup> 2 Sam. 3. 27.—<sup>l</sup> 2 Sam. 20. 10.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *put*.  
<sup>m</sup> Verse 9; Prov. 20. 26.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Sam. 19. 31, 38.

<sup>o</sup> 2 Samuel 9. 7, 10; 19. 28.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Samuel 17. 27.  
<sup>q</sup> 2 Samuel 16. 5.—<sup>4</sup> Hebrew, *strong*.

ences. This charge concerning Joab is but a particular application of the more general charge in verse 3. A strict regard for the honour of Jehovah, and for his statutes, laws, judgments, and testimonies, required that the crimes of the bloody Joab should receive their merited penalty; but David seems to have felt that his own hands were too full of blood, and his own heart had been too deeply stained with "blood-guiltiness," (Psa. li, 14) to allow him to be the instrument of Joab's punishment. His own unworthiness made him feel that the son of Zeruiah was too strong for him, and hence this charge to Solomon. It was not "a dark legacy of long-cherished vengeance," as Stanley avers, though personal feelings were no doubt involved, but a solemn responsibility resting on the king of Israel as the guardian of Jehovah's honour. He that "keeps the charge of Jehovah" must, if he regard the safety of the kingdom and the honour of its laws, show that "he beareth not the sword in vain." See Rom. xiii, 4. "David does not mention, among Joab's sins, that one which caused him *personally* the most poignant grief—the murder of Absalom. Not for sins committed against David as a father, but for sins committed against the law and majesty of God, does David advise Solomon the king, as the keeper of God's law and the guardian of God's honour, to punish the guilty offender."—*Wordsworth*. **Shed the blood of war in peace**—Shed in time of peace blood which should have been shed only in warfare. As in the case of Abner, with whom David had made a treaty of peace, but whom Joab treacherously slew at the gate of He-

bron. 2 Sam. iii, 12–30. **Put the blood of war upon his girdle . . . and in his shoes**—That is, he stained his garments with innocent blood, the blood of those whom he could have lawfully slain only in battle. The words are to be taken literally, and with special reference to the case of Amasa. See 2 Sam. xx, 8–10. When Joab, after the murder of Amasa, returned his sword to its girdle he doubtless stained the girdle, and probably his feet also, with the blood of the slain captain. Or we suppose that the one fearful thrust that disembowelled Amasa caused the blood to spurt out, and spatter Joab from his girdle to his feet.

**6. His hoar head**—Gray hairs are venerable, but the hoary headed sinner is not to be saved by his whitened locks. Joab was doubtless younger than David, but still far gone in years. We need not deny that David had feelings of personal revenge towards this man who had injured him so much, for we are not to look for the saintliness required by the New Testament in even the noble David. This dying charge, however, was evidently not the offspring of personal revenge, but a measure of administrative wisdom.

**7. Barzillai the Gileadite**—See marginal references, and notes on 2 Sam. xix, 31–39.

**8. Shimei the son of Gera**—The same remarks which show the nature of David's charge concerning Joab, verse 5, apply here also. It is not so much the charge of a dying father to a son as of a righteous ruler to his successor on the throne. David feels that in some things his hands have been too feeble in the punishment of crimes. In the case of Shimei he had allowed

to Mahanaim: but 'he came down to meet me at Jordan, and \*I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. ■ Now therefore 'hold him not guiltless: for thou *art* a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head "bring thou down to the grave

<sup>r</sup> 2 Sam. 19. 18. — <sup>s</sup> 2 Sam. 19. 23. — <sup>t</sup> Exod. 20. 7; Job 9. 28. — <sup>u</sup> Gen. 42. 38; 44. 31. — <sup>v</sup> Chap. 1. 21; Acts 2. 29; 13. 36.

the royal majesty of Israel to be insulted and the offender to go unpunished. **I swear to him... I will not put thee to death**—But David's oath was not binding on Solomon.

**9. His hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood**—Dr. Kennicott tries to make this passage mean precisely the opposite of what it says by connecting it with the first sentence of the verse, and understanding the negative in that sentence to be carried over and implied in this. But the passages he quotes as grammatical parallels are not at all relevant, for their connexion is so close that no one can mistake the meaning, whilst here the two sentences he proposes to link together in the same way are separated by two intervening affirmative sentences. Then, the ground of this untenable criticism is the assumption that David desired to bind Solomon under the same oath to protect the life of Shimei that he himself had made at Jordan. 2 Sam. xix. 18. But if the honour and dignity of the kingdom called for the life of the bloody Joab, so did it also for the punishment of this blasphemous Benjamite; and this David's words most clearly imply. He leaves it, however, to Solomon's wise judgment to decide what his penalty shall be; and Solomon, though at first disposed to let him live and die in peace, was at length obliged in justice to bring down his gray head to the grave with blood. See verses 36–46.

**10. David slept with his fathers**—These words are properly supposed by many to teach the separate conscious existence of the soul after death. They may, indeed, denote that common sleep which all the dead are sleeping; but beyond this they seem to point to

with blood. **10** So \*David slept with his fathers, and was buried in "the city of David. **11** And the days that David \*reigned over Israel *were* forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

**12** Then sat Solomon upon the throne

<sup>20</sup> 2 Samuel 5. 7. — <sup>22</sup> 2 Samuel 5. 4; 1 Chronicles 29. 26, 27. — <sup>23</sup> 1 Chronicles 9. 23; 2 Chronicles 1. 1.

that spiritual and blissful association in Paradise which the New Testament revelation brings more clearly to light, and are equivalent to being gathered to one's people. Compare Gen. xxv. 8. It cannot be urged, however, that these words at all determine the actual state of the dead. **Was buried in the city of David**—That is, in Jerusalem, "the city which he had made his own, and which could only be honoured, not polluted, by containing his grave. It was, no doubt, hewn in the rocky sides of the hill, and became the centre of the catacomb in which his descendants, the kings of Judah, were interred after him. It remained one of the landmarks of the ruined city after the return from the captivity, (Neh. iii. 16,) and was pointed out down to the latest times of the Jewish people. 'His sepulchre is with us unto this day,' says Peter at Pentecost, (Acts ii. 29;) and Josephus states that Solomon, having buried a vast treasure in the tomb, one of its chambers was broken open by Hyrcanus, and another by Herod the Great. It is said to have fallen into ruin in the time of Hadrian. The vast cavern, with its many tombs, no doubt exists under the ruins of Jerusalem, and its discovery will close many a controversy on the topography of the Holy City. But down to this time its situation is unknown."—Stanley. Among the Orientals, in ancient as in modern times, it was not customary to bury within the gates of a city; but here, says Wordsworth, "was a glimpse of a better time, when death would no longer be regarded as an unclean thing, and when the grave would be hallowed and beautified by the burial of Christ, the Son of David, the King of the true Zion."

of David his father; and his kingdom was established greatly. **13** And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, "Comest thou peaceably? And he said, Peaceably. **14** He said moreover, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And she said, Say on. **15** And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his from the Lord. **16** And now I ask one petition of thee, deny me not. And she said unto him, Say on. **17** And he said, Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife. **18** And Bathsheba said,

<sup>e</sup> 1 Sam. 16. 4, 5.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 1. 5.—<sup>b</sup> 1 Chron. 22. 9, 10; 28. 5-7; Prov. 21. 30; Dan. 2. 21.

#### FALL OF ADONIJAH, 12-25.

**12. His (Solomon's) kingdom was established greatly**—By the fact that he was chosen of God, and inaugurated and anointed in his father's lifetime, and instructed by the wise counsels of David. He was also confirmed in his kingdom, as the writer proceeds to show, by the destruction of those who had conspired against him, and were at heart his enemies. Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab, and Shimei could not be trusted; and the kingdom was not safe with them at liberty. So the sacred writer at once informs us how these dangerous persons were taken out of the way.

**13. Came to Bathsheba**—As Nathan had succeeded through the powerful influence of this woman in securing the throne to Solomon, (see chap. i, 11-31,) so Adonijah now hopes through her to gain his ends. **Comest thou peaceably**—With no hostile or sinister designs? (Compare 1 Sam. xvi, 4.) His recent usurpation was a sufficient reason for her to imagine some new evil design.

**15. The kingdom was mine**—By the right of primogeniture. **All Israel set their faces on me**—A multitude of people had followed the ambitious youth, as we may learn from chapter i, 9; but it was a stretching beyond the bounds of truth to call that se-

Well; I will speak for thee unto the king. **19** Bathsheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand. **20** Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother; for I will not say thee nay. **21** And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. **22** And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *turn not away my face*, Psa. 132. 10.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 1.3,4.—<sup>d</sup> Exod. 20. 12.—<sup>e</sup> Psa. 45.9.

ditions crowd all Israel. **It was his from the Lord**—By these cautious words he seeks to allay suspicion, and win the favour of Bathsheba.

**18. Well; I will speak for thee**—But did not Bathsheba perceive the treasonable project hidden under Adonijah's petition? Probably not in all its consequences. She doubtless had some fear of him, and was anxious as far as possible to conciliate him, for she knew that his hereditary right to the throne had been set aside by Jehovah's choice of her son Solomon.

**19. The king rose up to meet her**—Here we see with what respect and honour the "queen mother" was treated. Bathsheba now, as mother of the reigning king, has more power and influence in court than she had while David lived. See note on chap. xv, 13. **Caused a seat to be set**—The word here rendered *seat* is the same as that rendered *throne* in the preceding sentence. It was evidently a royal seat, and placed on the king's right hand—the place of honour.

**20. One small petition**—These words show that Bathsheba did not clearly comprehend the treasonable import of Adonijah's request.

**22. Ask for him the kingdom also**—To marry Abishag, who was virtually a concubine of the deceased king, (see note on chap. i, 3,) was ostensibly

for 'Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah. **23** Then king Solomon swore by the Lord, saying, "God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. **24** Now therefore, as the Lord liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me a house, as he<sup>h</sup> promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. **25** And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.

**26** And unto Abiathar the priest said

*f* Chap. 1. 7.—*g* Ruth 1. 17.—*h* 2 Sam. 7. 11, 13; 1 Chron. 22. 10.—*i* Josh. 21. 18.—*e* Heb. *a man of death*.

to invade the royal harem, and thus assume royal prerogatives. So in the case of Absalom. See note on 2 Sam. xii, 8, and xvi, 21. The wary Solomon detects at once the far-reaching plot of his rival brother, and at once implicates him with Joab and Abiathar in a conspiracy against his throne. We have, indeed, no evidence that these three had entered together into such conspiracy, but it is not improbable that they had concerted with each other, and concluded if Abishag were but granted in marriage to Adonijah, the right of the latter to the kingdom would be tacitly acknowledged, and the way opened for successful rebellion.

**24. Adonijah shall be put to death this day**—To the charge of those interpreters who condemn this vigorous severity of Solomon as a needless act of cruelty, the following words of Keil are an excellent and all-sufficient reply: "All attack or censure depends on unbiblical views of law and right, and on a complete misunderstanding of the theocratic point of view, according to which alone the question can be decided. By the attempt to usurp the throne Adonijah had already rebelled against Jehovah, who had appointed Solomon as the successor of David. Now if, after Solomon had forgiven his transgression, he comes out with a new attempt at rebellion, duty to God and the theocracy demanded of Solomon not to have respect to consanguinity, but to act according to the rigour of the law."

the king, Get thee to 'Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou *art*<sup>a</sup> worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, <sup>b</sup> because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David my father, and because <sup>c</sup> thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted. **27** So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord; that he might<sup>m</sup> fulfil the word of the Lord, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

**28** Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab<sup>n</sup> had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab

*z* 1 Sam. 23. 6; 2 Sam. 15. 24, 29.—*l* 1 Sam. 22. 20, 23; 2 Sam. 15. 24.—*m* 1 Sam. 2. 31-35.—*n* Chap. 1. 7.

DEPOSITION OF ABIATHAR, 26, 27.

**26. Anathoth**—The modern *Anata*, four miles northeast of Jerusalem. See on Joshua xxi, 18. It was a city of the priests and the home of Jeremiah. Jer. i, 1. **Thou art worthy of death**—By being an accomplice in the conspiracy of Adonijah. See note on chap. i, 7. But Solomon's respect for his holy word and office, and his knowledge of Abiathar's association with David in his afflictions, led him to change his punishment from death to banishment. **Thou barest the ark**—That is, superintended the bearing of it. See note on 2 Sam. xv, 24.

**27. That he might fulfil the word of the Lord**—See 1 Sam. ii, 33-36, and notes there. "This word had been partly fulfilled by the death of Hophni and Phinehas, (1 Sam. iv, 11,) and by the destruction of the priests by Saul, (1 Sam. xxii, 18,) and now it was *fully accomplished*, and therefore the author here uses the words, 'that he might fulfil.'"—*Wordsworth*. But Eli's posterity were not to be utterly cut off; and after the exile we find descendants of Ithamar returning from Babylon. Ezra viii, 2.

DEATH OF JOAB, 28-35.

**28. Tidings came to Joab**—Woful tidings to the old commander—old, but ambitious still. Knowledge of Adonijah's death and Abiathar's banishment left him no room for hope, for he saw at once that he was implicated in the guilt of treason. Strange that

fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and <sup>o</sup> caught hold on the horns of the altar. **29** And it was told king Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and, behold, *he is* by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. **30** And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. **31** And the king said unto him, <sup>p</sup> Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him; <sup>q</sup> that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father. **32** And the LORD <sup>r</sup> shall return his blood upon his own head, who fell upon two men

<sup>o</sup> Chap. 1. 50.—<sup>p</sup> Exod. 21. 14.—<sup>q</sup> Num. 35. 23; Deut. 19. 13; 21. 8, 9.—<sup>r</sup> Judges 9. 24, 57; Psa. 7. 16.—<sup>s</sup> 2 Chron. 21. 13.—<sup>t</sup> 2 Sam. 3. 27.

the stern old warrior, who had been so nobly loyal to his king during Absalom's rebellion, should now be implicated in conspiracy! But his ambition paved his way to ruin. See note on chap. i. 7. **Fled unto the tabernacle**—Which was at Gibeon. This seemed to be his only hope of safety. See note on chap. i. 50. At Gibeon he slew Amasa, (2 Sam. xx, 8,) and there he is himself slain.

**30. Come forth**—Such criminals as Joab even the altar would not defend, but the law required that they be taken from the altar to be slain. "If a man come presumptuously on his neighbour to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from mine altar that he may die." Exod. xxi, 14. **Nay; but I will die here**—He knew that to leave that sacred spot was to go to certain death, and he seems to have hoped that Solomon's reverence for the altar would prevent his being slain there. But his bloodguiltiness was, in Solomon's mind, too great to admit him to the least compassion. Compare Num. xxxv, 30–33 and Deut. xix, 13.

**33. Upon . . . his seed for ever**—So the bitter curse of David had long before predicted. See 2 Sam. iii, 29. On that archaic jurisprudence which visited the sins of the fathers upon the children, see note on Josh. vii, 24.

more righteous <sup>u</sup> and better than he, and slew them with the sword, my father David not knowing *thereof*, <sup>v</sup> to wit, 'Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and 'Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah. **33** Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and <sup>w</sup> upon the head of his seed for ever: <sup>x</sup> but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD. **34** So <sup>y</sup> Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, and slew him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. **35** And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host: and <sup>z</sup> Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of 'Abiathar.

**36** And the king sent and called for

<sup>u</sup> 2 Sam. 20. 10.—<sup>v</sup> 2 Sam. 3. 29.—<sup>w</sup> Prov. 25. 5.—<sup>x</sup> Verses 25, 31, 46.—<sup>y</sup> Num. 25. 11, 12, 13; 1 Sam. 2. 35; 1 Chron. 6. 53; 24. 3.—<sup>z</sup> Verse 27.

**34. Buried in his own house in the wilderness**—The old soldier was laid to rest among his native hills near Bethlehem: probably in his father's sepulchre, where his brother Asahel had been buried 2 Sam. ii, 32. This was in the wilderness of Judah. See note on Josh. xv, 61. He had been a mighty and valiant warrior, and Solomon allowed him an honourable burial.

**35. Zadok the priest . . . in the room of Abiathar**—Thus was fulfilled another part of the prophecy to Eli. See 1 Sam. ii, 35, and note. "The ark and tabernacle had never been united since the capture of the ark by the Philistines in the days of Eli. Hence a double exercise of priestly functions in two different places ensued. Even at this time there was one altar of burnt offering at Gibeon, and another before the ark on Mount Zion. See note on 2 Sam. vi, 17. But now, under Solomon, the prince of peace, the type of Christ, this confusion was about to cease, and unity of worship was to be established by the erection of the temple."—*Wordsworth*.

DEATH OF SHIMEI, 36–46.

**36. Sent and called for Shimei**—Who was probably still residing at Bahurim. Compare marginal reference.

\*Shimei, and said unto him, Build thee a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. **37** For it shall be, *that* on the day thou goest out, and passest over <sup>b</sup>the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: <sup>c</sup>thy blood shall be upon thine own head. **38** And Shimei said unto the king, The saying *is* good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. **39** And it came to pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto <sup>d</sup>Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants *be* in Gath. **40** And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. **41** And it was told Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again. **42** And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him, <sup>e</sup>Did I not make

<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam. 16. 5; verse 8. — <sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. 15. 23. — <sup>c</sup> Lev. 20. 9; Josh. 2. 19; 2 Sam. 1. 16. — <sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 27. 2. — <sup>e</sup> Verses 36, 38; Psa. 15. 4; Luke 19. 22.

**37. The brook Kidron**—This way was probably specified because any attempt of Shimei to escape would be quite likely to lead him first in the direction of his home, which lay beyond the Kidron. **Thy blood...upon thine own head**—A common expression to denote the punishment of death. Compare marginal reference.

**40. Went, and brought his servants from Gath**—This some might think a slight offence, and not worthy of such bitter punishment as Solomon inflicted. But by this offence he broke his solemn oath, (compare verse 43,) and so was guilty of perjury. He also showed a reckless and restless spirit. When his slaves escaped he ought to have informed the king, and received from him permission to bring them back; but his neglect to do even that showed an incorrigible recklessness.

**44. The king said moreover to Shimei**—It is to be noticed respecting all these four enemies of the king that their last offence was but the immediate occasion, not the sole cause, of their sudden ruin. It was previous guilt, contracted by former crimes or disloy-

alty, that now returned upon them, and by further aggravation made them ripe for destruction. **46. The kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon**—By the utter crushing out of treason in the removal of those who alone were disposed to rebellion. Solomon might say from his own experience: "Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness." Prov. xxv, 5.

### CHAPTER III.

**A**ND <sup>a</sup>Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took

<sup>f</sup> 2 Samuel 16. 5. — <sup>g</sup> Psalm 7. 16; Ezekiel 17. 19. — <sup>h</sup> Proverbs 25. 5. — <sup>i</sup> Verse 12; 2 Chronicles 1. 1. — <sup>a</sup> Chapter 7. 8; 9. 24.

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### CHAPTER III.

SOLOMON'S AFFINITY WITH EGYPT, 1.

**1. Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh**—This seems to have been his first act of foreign policy, and was, perhaps, designed to counteract the influence of Hadad the Edomite, who had fled to Egypt during David's reign, and was now securely housed in the royal family. See chap. xi, 14–22. Every thing in the history of Hadad naturally conspired to make him a settled enemy of the kingdom of Israel; and, perhaps, at a later period, he had a hand with Jeroboam in planning the revolt of the

Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her

2 Sam.

ten tribes of Israel. Solomon, doubtless, expected to strengthen his kingdom by this affinity with Egypt, and to prevent invasion from that quarter. It was the first intercourse between these nations since the time of the Exodus, and the first of those foreign alliances which brought the Israelites into disastrous intimacy with the heathen powers. Its immediate effect was probably favourable to Solomon by increasing his fame and comparative importance among the nations, and adding to his dominions, (chap. ix, 16.) but it resulted in a commerce forbidden by the law, (chap. x, 26-29,) and thus involved the Israelitish kingdom in numerous evils. The Pharaoh here named is by Winer and Ewald identified with Psotsennes, the last king (in Manetho's table) of the twenty-first dynasty: called also the Tanite dynasty from the city Tanis, the scriptural Zoan, which was then the place of the royal residence.

**Took Pharaoh's daughter**—According to the letter of the law only marriage with the Canaanitish tribes was forbidden, (Exod. xxxiv, 16,) and intermarriage with nations outside of Canaan was not only not prohibited but tolerated in the examples, never rebuked, of Joseph's marriage with the daughter of an Egyptian priest, (Gen. xli, 45;) of Moses's marriage with a daughter of Midian, (Exod. ii, 21,) and that of Boaz and Ruth. But though the law did not forbid these marriages, they were not in harmony with its spirit; and it was by foreign marriages that Solomon's heart was seduced from the worship of Jehovah. See note on chap. xi, 1.

**The city of David**—This was built upon Mount Zion, the Jebusite stronghold, and has been identified for centuries with the southwestern hill of the modern city—"the upper city" of Josephus. See notes on 2 Sam. v, 6, 7, and compare Josephus, *Wars*, v, 4, 1. But recently this locality of Zion has been called in question. Thrupp, Fergusson, and Rawlinson identify Zion with Moriah, and so locate "the city of David" on the eastern, or

into the city of David, until he had

5. 7.

temple, mountain. The chief reasons for this identification are: 1.) That in many passages Zion is distinguished from Jerusalem. For example, 2 Kings xix, 31; Psal. li, 18; Joel iii, 16; Zech. i, 17. These passages, however, are all poetic parallelisms, and Zion may be distinguished from the rest of the city as being its most conspicuous feature. 2.) The passages which speak of Zion as the "holy hill," or chosen seat of Jehovah, are thought applicable only to the temple mountain: (Psal. ii, 6; cxxxii, 13; Isa. lx, 14; Jer. xxxi, 6; Joel iii, 17, 21; Zech. viii, 3;) but on whichever mountain "the city of David" was built, it was consecrated by the ark of God before the temple was erected, and so would ever be celebrated as "chosen" and "holy." Afterwards the ark was transferred from the city of David to the temple. Compare 2 Sam. vi, 16; 1 Kings viii, 1. 3.) Some passages in 1 Maccabees (iv, 37, 60; vii, 33) seem to identify Zion with the temple mount, as, "they went up to Mount Zion and saw the sanctuary desolate, and the altar profaned." But all this may have been seen from the modern Zion, as one looked across the valley; and Zion may also be used in the wider sense of Jerusalem. 4.) Finally, Psal. xlviii, 2 is thought to be decisive against the modern Zion, which is the most southern extremity of the city. But it may well be asked, in reply, what more beauty of situation or elevation has Moriah than the modern Zion "on the sides of the north?" The passage is very properly rendered by Gesenius thus: "Beautiful in its elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion; (the joy) of the remotest north is the city of the Great King." But if we retain the rendering "sides of the north," we may either understand the reference to its appearance as being immediately north of the border of Judah, (Josh. xv, 8,) or, as Alexander suggests, "As it rose upon the view of the army returning from the south." From whatever quarter viewed, the modern Zion is more noticeable for its

made an end of building his own house, and <sup>d</sup>the house of the Lord, and <sup>e</sup>the wall of Jerusalem round about.

**2** Only the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built

unto the name of the Lord, until those days. **3** And Solomon <sup>f</sup>loved the Lord, <sup>g</sup>walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places.

<sup>e</sup> Chap. 7. 1. — <sup>d</sup> Chap. 6. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 9. 15, 19. <sup>f</sup> Lev. 17. 3-5; Deut. 12. 2, 4, 5; chap. 22. 43.

<sup>g</sup> Deut. 6. 5; 30. 16, 20; Psal. 31. 23; Rom. 8. 28; 1 Cor. 8. 3. — <sup>h</sup> Verses 6, 14.

*elevation* than Moriah. Until more conclusive evidences are adduced to overthrow the ancient tradition, we therefore prefer to locate the city of David on the southwestern hill, "the upper city," which, elevated so conspicuously above the neighbouring heights, would be most naturally fixed upon by the Jebusites as their stronghold, or castle. Subsequently Solomon removed his Egyptian wife "out of the city of David" to his own palace, (chap. ix. 24; 2 Chron. viii. 11,) which seems to have been built upon the southern slope of Moriah. See note at the beginning of chap. vii. **Until... his own house**—He had no appropriate palace of his own as yet, and he esteemed the palace of David, where the ark had been brought, too holy for the residence of a foreign princess. See 2 Chron. viii. 11. Whence it appears that Pharaoh's daughter must have dwelt for many years, not in the royal house, as The-nius thinks, but in some private residence upon Mount Zion, somewhat apart from the more sacred places. **House of the Lord**—The temple. **The wall of Jerusalem**—This, though strongly fortified by David, (2 Sam. v. 9,) was greatly enlarged and strengthened by Solomon. See chaps. ix. 15; xi. 27.

#### STATE OF RELIGION AT THE BEGINNING OF SOLOMON'S REIGN, 2. 3.

**2. Only**—A particle apparently having reference to the last sentence of chap. ii. 46. The unsettled state of Divine worship was now the only thing that seemed to show that the kingdom was not as thoroughly established as it might be. **The people sacrificed in high places**—A practice more or less prevalent in Israel from the time of the Judges. See note on 1 Sam. ix. 12. It brought the Divine service of Israel into a resemblance of the idolatrous

practices of the heathen, who always erected their altars on the tops of hills or mountains, presuming they were nearer Deity and heaven. This sacrificing in high places was not idolatry; they worshipped Jehovah, the true God, on elevated spots, and therefore by the *high places* so frequently mentioned in the following history we must not understand idolatrous shrines. But even this worship of Jehovah, in such places, was fraught with danger on account of its resemblance to heathen customs. There was danger to Israel that this sacrificing on high places might degenerate into heathenish idolatry; and so the kingdom itself was unsafe as long as this state of things continued, for pure religion and appropriate worship of the true God are indispensable supports of a righteous and permanent government. **Because there was no house built**—Herein was the reason and excuse for the unsettled state of Divine worship, both at that time and previously. See note on 1 Sam. ix. 12.

**3. Solomon loved the Lord**—This further shows that the sacrificing in high places was not the result of alienation from Jehovah. **Statutes of David**—Customs, usages, and laws of religious conduct practiced by David. But it does not appear that David ever sacrificed or burnt incense in high places. The contrary is implied in this verse; and it is more than intimated that though this worship was tolerated because not offered to false gods, and because there was no house yet built to Jehovah, still both Solomon and his people were censurable for allowing it such great extent and prominence, and thereby paving the way for future idolatry in Israel. It would have been safer and better to have sacrificed only before the **ark** of the covenant, as Solomon did after his return from Gibeon,

4 And 'the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; \*for that *was* the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. 5 'In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon "in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 "And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great 'mercy, according as he °walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept

for him this great kindness, that thou 'hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. 7 And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: °and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* 'to go out or come in. 8 And thy servant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou 'hast chosen, a great people, 'that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 "Give therefore thy servant an °understanding heart 'to judge thy people, that I may °discern

† 2 Chron. 1. 3.—*k* 1 Chron. 16. 39; 2 Chron. 1. 3.—*l* Chap. 9. 3; 2 Chron. 1. 7.—*n* Num. 12. 6; Matt. 1. 20; 2. 13, 19.—*o* 2 Chron. 1. 8, &c.—1 Or. *bounty*.—*p* Chapter 2. 4; 9. 4; 2 Kings 20. 3; Psa. 15. 2.

*p* Chapter 1. 48.—*q* 1 Chronicles 29. 1.—*r* Numbers 27. 17.—*s* Deuteronomy 7. 6.—*t* Genesis 13. 16; 15. 5.—*u* 2 Chronicles 1. 10; Proverbs 2. 3-9; James 1. 5.—*v* Hebrew, *hearing*.—*w* Psalm 72. 1, 2.—*x* Hebrews 5. 14.

(verse 15;) or else only at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was. 1 Chron. xvi, 39.

#### SOLOMON'S WISE CHOICE, 4-15

4. **Gibeon**—The modern *el-Jib*, a few miles northwest of Jerusalem. See note on Josh. ix, 3. **That was the great high place**—The most distinguished and sacred of all the heights on which the people were wont to sacrifice, for there were the tabernacle and the brazen altar. 2 Chron. i, 3, 5. **A thousand burnt offerings**—This great number corresponded with the thousands of the congregation that went with Solomon to the high place, (see 1 Chron. i, 2, 3,) and also denoted the national significance of the occasion. So at the dedication of the temple Solomon offered twenty-two thousand oxen, and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep, or, as elsewhere expressed, "Sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude." See chap. viii, 5, 63. We are not to suppose that all these offerings were made at the same instant or by one person; still less that Solomon offered them with his own hands. Scores of priests officiated on such occasions, and the sacred festival lasted many days.

5. **In a dream by night**—This was one mode of Divine revelation. See marginal reference. In such cases the soul was raised to a state of Divine ecstasy and illumination, and held conscious intercourse with God or angels; **but when the natural, waking con-**

sciousness returned, the person knew it was a dream. See verse 15.

7. **I am but a little child**—His exact age at this time is not known, but he was evidently still a youth, probably not more than twenty years of age. David, in his old age, spoke of him as "young and tender." 1 Chron. xxix, 1. Solomon, with graceful modesty and humility, feels and acknowledges his youth and inexperience. **To go out or come in**—An idiomatic expression denoting the whole official conduct of a ruler before his people. Compare Numbers xxvii, 17.

8. **That cannot be numbered**—An acknowledged fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham. Gen. xiii, 16. Solomon feels that he has been made king of the covenant people.

9. **An understanding heart**—Noble choice! "It was the choice offered to the youthful king on the threshold of life, the choice so often imagined in fiction, and here actually presented in real life. The answer is the ideal answer of such a prince, burdened with the responsibility of his position. He made the demand for the gift which he, of all the heroes of the ancient Church, was the first to claim. He showed his wisdom by asking for wisdom. He became wise because he had set his heart upon it. This was to him the special aspect through which the Divine Spirit was to be approached, and grasped, and made to bear on the wants of men; not the highest, not the choice of David, not the choice of Isaiah; but still the

between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? **10** And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. **11** And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast <sup>a</sup>not asked for thyself <sup>b</sup>long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding <sup>c</sup>to discern judgment; **12** Behold, I have done according to thy word: <sup>d</sup>lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise

<sup>a</sup> James 4. 3.—<sup>b</sup> 3 Heb. *many days*.—<sup>c</sup> 4 Heb. *to hear*.—<sup>d</sup> 1 John 5. 14, 15.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 4. 29-31; 5. 12; 10. 24; Eccles. 1. 16.—<sup>f</sup> Matt. 6. 33; Eph. 3. 20.—<sup>g</sup> Chap. 4. 21, 24; 10. 23, 25. &c.; Prov.

choice of Solomon.”—*Stanley*. **To judge thy people**—The Oriental mind always associates the functions of the judge with the monarch, as he is expected to hear and decide important cases. See note on verse 16.

**11. Understanding to discern judgment**—Literally, *to know to hear judgment*; that is, ability to understand how to hear suits or causes, and dispense justice.

**12. Lo, I have given thee**—It is the Father's good pleasure to give wisdom to them that seek for it. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” James i, 5. **None like thee**—Solomon's wisdom was, to a certain extent, a supernatural gift, a signal dispensation of Divine favour, which must not be classed with natural acquirements which are ordinarily obtained by dint of mental application alone. But while this much appears upon the face of the history before us, we must not suppose that all his knowledge was so special and supernatural an endowment as that he received it without any effort on his part. He doubtless studied and toiled like other men for his acquirements, but he was divinely and supernaturally assisted in a manner and to an extent which no other man ever enjoyed. We shall see further in chap. iv, 29-34, that Solomon's wisdom comprehended natural science, political sagacity, and a deep insight into spiritual truths.

like unto thee. **13** And I have also <sup>a</sup>given thee that which thou hast not asked, both <sup>b</sup>riches, and honour: so that there <sup>c</sup>shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. **14** And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, <sup>d</sup>as thy father David did walk, then I will <sup>e</sup>lengthen thy days. **15** And Solomon <sup>f</sup>awoke; and, behold, *it was a dream*. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and <sup>g</sup>made a feast to all his servants.

3. 16.—<sup>5</sup> Or, *hath not been*.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 15. 5.—<sup>d</sup> Psalm 91. 16; Proverbs 3. 2.—<sup>e</sup> So Genesis 41. 7.—<sup>f</sup> So Genesis 40. 20; chapter 8. 65; Esther 1. 3; Daniel 5. 1; Mark 6. 21.

**13. Also... both riches, and honour**—How true to the principle of the Divine government enunciated by Christ, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt. vi, 33.

**14. If thou wilt walk in my ways**—So the Divine promises were largely conditional. **Then I will lengthen thy days**—But this wise king, whose reign began so auspiciously, failed to meet the conditions of long-continued prosperity. “No character in the sacred writings,” says Dr. Clarke, “disappoints us more than the character of Solomon.”

**15. Behold, it was a dream**—Nevertheless it was a real Divine communication, given by inspiration of God. See note on verse 5. **Came to Jerusalem**—The tabernacle was at Gibeon, the ark at Jerusalem, and Solomon's going from the former to the latter place with sacrificial offerings was a most significant act, opening a new epoch in the history of Israelitish worship. It was, probably, the last public service of the kind at Gibeon, and so, in effect, was a public transfer of sacrificial worship from the wandering, unsettled tabernacle, to that divinely chosen spot where alone henceforth Jehovah would be pleased to accept the more public offerings and vows of Israel. See Deut. xii, 5. It also symbolized that coming hour when, under the “greater than Solomon,” all separation of tabernacle and ark would be

**16** Then came there two women, *that were harlots*, unto the king, and <sup>e</sup>stood before him. **17** And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. **18** And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we *were* together; *there was* no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. **19** And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. **20** And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. **21** And when I rose in the morning to <sup>h</sup>give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it

<sup>g</sup> Numbers 27. 2.—<sup>h</sup> Genesis 21. 7.  
<sup>i</sup> Proverbs 25. 8.

forever past, and the true worshippers would advance from a *cultus* that made locality a test, to find their great altar in the inner temple of the spirit, and to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. John iv, 21-24.

#### SOLOMON'S JUDICIAL SAGACITY, 16-28.

**16. Then came there two women.**—This seems to have been the first judicial decision of the new king, and it established in all Israel (verse 28) his reputation as a wise ruler and judge. It is added here, immediately after the history of his journey to Gibeon, as an illustration of the wisdom which he asked and received from God. "A monarch's sagacity in the administration of justice," says Kitto, "was calculated to make the most marked impression upon the popular mind, and likely to be most generally talked about through the land. This quality also came more home to the personal concerns of his subjects than any other, and was for that reason alone the more carefully regarded. The administration of justice was in all ancient monarchies, as it is now in the East, a most important part of the royal duties and functions; and there is no quality more highly prized than that keen discernment in the royal judge which detects the clew of real evidence amidst

was not my son, which I did bear. **22** And the other woman said, Nay; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king. **23** Then said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living. **24** And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. **25** And the king said, <sup>i</sup>Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. **26** Then spake the woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for <sup>k</sup>her bowels <sup>e</sup>yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither

<sup>k</sup> Gen. 43. 30; Isa. 49. 15; Jer. 31. 20; Hos. 11. 8.  
<sup>l</sup> Heb. *were hot*.

conflicting testimony, or that ready tact which devises a test of truth, where the evidence affords not even the clew to any grounds of decision." And so this incident throws light upon the manners of those times. Even **harlots**, (for true criticism will not allow the Chaldee rendering of the word זנות by *innkeepers*,) persons of abandoned character, were permitted to appear in the royal presence and plead their own causes.

**21. When I had considered it in the morning.**—Here is a graphic word-picture. The true mother, with all the alarm and earnestness of a smitten heart, looks at the dead child *again* and *again*, and turns it over, scrutinizing every feature, and lo, it is not hers!

**26. Let it be neither mine nor thine.**—Wordsworth compares this language of the false mother to the demands of schism in the Church of Christ, and calls it "the popular language of sects and sectaries, who say, Let various forms of religion be equally encouraged and patronized; there are numerous different ways all leading to heaven, and every man is free to choose which he likes best for himself, without any regard to the authority and judgment of Christ speaking in his Church. But the true mother shuns division and loves unity." There may

mine nor thine, *but divide it.* **27** Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. **28** And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the 'wis-

*2 Verses 9, 11, 12.—7 Hebrew, in the*

be some force in such comparison, if it is aimed against that wicked kind of schism which delights to make discord and dispute among the true disciples of Christ; but when aimed against the various evangelical denominations into which Protestant Christendom is divided, the comparison becomes ludicrous, and the comment above quoted may be turned upon its author and the Church party he represents with biting force. "High Churchism," whether in Rome, England, or America, has been, in her legitimate results, the most schismatic of all "sects." "Her zeal for unity," which the above-named writer regards as "the evidence of her marriage and of her motherhood," has never scrupled, when she had the power, to use the fagot and the sword in accomplishing her objects. So she has followed the fleshly methods of the child of that Sinai "which gendereth to bondage," (Gal. iv, 24, compare 29.) Not organic unity, but the unity of spiritual freedom, is the mark of that "Jerusalem which is the mother of us all." Contemptible is that narrowness which sees in the unity of Romish ecclesiasticism a something better than the unity of spirit and of life which is the glory of evangelical Protestantism. The true mother in this narrative showed at least the spirit of concession and yielding to her rival; but when did ever the narrow ecclesiasticism of papacy or semi-papacy yield even the most trivial point to a rival "sect" in order to secure organic unity, or when did she ever say to her rival, in the spirit of the true mother, "Give her the living child?"

**28. The wisdom of God was in him**—That is, wisdom given by God. The people perceived that their king was divinely gifted to execute justice. His manner of procedure was very for-

dom of God *was* <sup>7</sup> in him to do judgment.

#### CHAPTER IV.

**SO** king Solomon was king over all Israel. **2** And these *were* the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, **3** Elihoreph and

*midst of him.—1 Or, the chief officer.*

eign from our forms of justice, but it was truly Oriental, and showed the Divine gift of detecting and exposing the guilty, and defending the innocent, which is the great end of all true litigation.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### SOLOMON'S OFFICIALS, 1-19.

The design of the sacred writer in introducing this list of Solomon's chief officers seems to have been both to show the constitution of the kingdom and to indicate its power and glory. It is not likely that all these officers were appointed at the very beginning of Solomon's reign, and continued without the occurrence of a death or change among them during the whole forty years of his reign. But this list probably contains the names of the most distinguished officers which during the whole reign of Solomon, or at least during its most flourishing period, helped to add lustre and dignity to his administration.

**1. King over all Israel**—This was true of Solomon during his whole reign, but could be said of no other. David for seven years ruled but a single tribe, and at the beginning of the reign of Solomon's successor the kingdom was rent asunder by the revolt of the ten tribes.

**2. Princes**—Hebrew, *the Scrim*. Superior officers; high state-dignitaries, in distinction from the prefects, or lesser officers mentioned below, verses 7-19. **Azariah the son of Zadok the priest**—The word כֹּהֵן, here rendered

*priest*, but in verse v *principal officer*, occurs three times in this list of officers, and if we adopt the present punctuation of the Hebrew, Septuagint, and English texts, and explain with Keil, Bähr, and others, that כֹּהֵן here means

Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, <sup>2</sup>scribes; <sup>a</sup>Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the <sup>b</sup>recorder. 4 And <sup>b</sup>Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the host: and Zadok and <sup>c</sup>Abiathar *were* the priests: 5 And Azariah the son of Nathan *was* over

<sup>3</sup> Or, *secretaries*.—*a* 2 Sam. 8. 16; 20. 24.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *remembrancer*.—*b* Chap. 2. 35.—*c* See chap. 2. 27.

<sup>a</sup> the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan *was* <sup>a</sup>principal officer, *and* <sup>a</sup>the king's friend: 6 And Ahishar *was* over the household: and <sup>a</sup>Adoniram the son of Abda *was* over the <sup>a</sup>tribute. 7 And Solomon had twelve officers over all

<sup>d</sup> Verse 7.—*e* 2 Sam. 8. 18; 20. 26.—<sup>f</sup> 2 Sam. 15. 37; 16. 16; 1 Chron. 27. 33.—<sup>g</sup> Chap. 5. 14.—<sup>4</sup> Or, *levy*.

a regent, or some privy counsellor of the king, then we have the word used in the space of four verses in three different senses. That כֹּהֵן means an

intimate counsellor of the king in verse 5 and in 2 Sam. viii, 18, is admitted in our notes; but if it means the same thing here, and defines the office of Azariah to be identical with that of Zabud the son of Nathan, why in the world are not these two persons holding the same office placed together in the list? Certainly the relative position of these two names in the record most naturally indicates that Azariah and Zabud did not hold the same office. It seems better, therefore, to adopt the punctuation of the Vulgate, and construe Azariah with the first two names of verse 3, and כֹּהֵן, *the priest*, in appo-

sition with Zadok. Thus, connecting verses 2 and 3, we read, "Azariah the son of Zadok the priest, Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes."

3. **Scribes...recorder**—On these words see notes at 2 Sam. viii, 16, 17. Solomon had different scribes, but the same recorder as his father David. **Shisha** was probably the same as **Seraiah**; (compare the reading in 1 Chron. xviii, 16;) so that his sons succeeded him in the office of scribe. See note on 2 Sam. xx, 25.

4. **Benaiah...over the host**—In the list of the warlike David's officers the captain of the host stands first, but under the peaceful reign of Solomon he stands in the third place. **Zadok and Abiathar were the priests**—Abiathar, though deposed by Solomon himself, (chap. ii, 27,) ever held his priestly dignity and character, so that when he no longer executed the duties of his office his name remained on the official list.

5. **Son of Nathan**—This Nathan

may have been either the prophet or son of David mentioned 2 Sam. v, 14. **Over the officers**—That is, the twelve officers mentioned in verse 7. So he was a sort of commissary-general for the whole kingdom. **Principal officer**—Here the word כֹּהֵן, which usually

means *priest*, manifestly has a different signification. By comparing 2 Sam. viii, 18 with 1 Chron. xviii, 17, we infer that it means a high officer whom the king treats as his intimate counsellor and confidential adviser. David chose his own sons for this office; and where is the monarch or chieftain who has not had some person or persons to serve him in this capacity? During his short triumph Absalom virtually set Ahithophel and Hushai in this office. That the king always, or even usually, followed the counsels of this officer is not to be supposed. His work was to suggest, not to adopt or decide, plans for his sovereign. He is further described as being *the king's friend*—that is, his personal confidant and favourite.

6. **Ahishar was over the household**—Overseer of the royal palace and family; the king's chamberlain. **Adoniram...over the tribute**—The same person who held this office during the later years of David's reign. See note on 2 Sam. xx, 24. The word מַסַּךְ, here rendered *tribute*, is translated

*levy* in chap. v, 13, 14, and this latter seems to be the true meaning. Adoniram had charge of the multitudes of men that were impressed out of all Israel to labour on the public works, and probably his general superintendency extended also over the thousands of foreign bondslaves that bore burdens, etc. See chap. v, 15; 2 Chron. ii, 17, 18.

7 **Twelve officers**—נְעָרִים, *prefects*. Collectors of the royal revenues, which

Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in the year made provision.

■ And these are their names: <sup>5</sup> The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim: <sup>9</sup> The son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaal-bim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan: <sup>10</sup> The son of Hesel, in Aruboth; to him pertained Socoh, and all the land of Hephher: <sup>11</sup> The son of

5 Or, *Ben-hur*.—6 Or, *Ben-dekar*.  
7 Or, *Ben-hesed*.

consisted not in money, but in the products of the land. Thus were furnished provisions for the king's household. **Each man his month**—Probably Azariah the son of Nathan, who was over these twelve officers, (verse 5,) notified each of them which month he would be required to provide for the king. According to Herodotus (i, 192) the kingdom of Persia was divided into districts, each one of which supplied the great king and his army with provisions for a given portion of the year.

8. **The son of Hur**—It is noticeable that the names of the fathers of these officers are given in each case, and in five cases the proper names of the officers themselves are not given at all. The margin, which follows the Vulgate, renders these five as proper names—*Ben-hur*, *Ben-dekar*, etc.; but it is more likely that the proper names of these five officers, if ever given, have fallen out of the text by the carelessness of transcribers. **Mount Ephraim**—The hill country in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim. See note on Judges xvii, 1.

9. **Makaz . . . Shaal-bim**—Places apparently in the tribe of Dan, but now unknown. **Beth-shemesh**—See on Josh. xv, 10, and 1 Sam. vi, 9. **Elon-beth-hanan**—Site unknown, but probably the same as Elon. Josh. xix, 43.

10. **Aruboth . . . Socoh . . Hephher**—Sites now unknown.

11. **All the region of Dor**—This was on the coast of the Mediterranean near Mount Carmel. See on Josh. xi, 2.

12. **Taanach and Megiddo**—In the great plain of Esdraelon. See on Josh. xii, 21; Judges v, 19. **Beth-shean**—The modern *Beisan*, between Mount Gilboa and the Jordan. See

Abinadab, in all the region of Dor; which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife: <sup>12</sup> Baana the son of Ahilud; to him pertained Taanach and Megiddo, and all Bethshean, which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Bethshean to Abel-meholah, even unto the place that is beyond Jokneam: <sup>13</sup> The son of Geber, in Ramoth-gilead; to him pertained the towns of

8 Or, *Ben-abinadab*.—9 Or, *Ben-geber*  
h Num. 32, 41.

Josh. xvii, 11. **Zartanah**—This place has not been identified. **Beneath Jezreel**—The city of Jezreel, which gave its name to the whole neighbouring valley, was on the site of the modern *Zerin*, near the western end of Mount Gilboa. See on Josh. xix, 18. *Beneath Jezreel* indicates that Bethshean and its neighbouring towns lay lower than Jezreel, a fact confirmed by Robinson: "Zerin lies comparatively high, and commands a wide and noble view, extending down the broad low valley on the east to Beisan. We could here see the acropolis of Beisan lying much lower than Zerin; and from every account that place appears to be situated not far above the level of the Jordan valley." **Abel-meholah**—Perhaps the modern *Khurbet-esh-Shuk*, at the eastern end of Mount Gilboa. **Jokneam**—The Hebrew is here *Jokneam*, but probably a later corruption of Jokneam, called in Josh. xii, 22, Jokneam of Carmel, and identified by Dr. Robinson with the modern *Tell Kaimon*, which holds a conspicuous position on the Carmel range, "commanding the main pass from the western portion of Esdraelon to the more southern plain." Baana's district thus took in the great valley of Jezreel, and extended from Bethshean on the east to Jokneam on the west.

13. **Son of Geber**—Perhaps the same Geber mentioned verse 19. **Ramoth-gilead**—One of the chief cities on the east side of the Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, allotted to the Levites and appointed a city of refuge. Supposed by many to have been at the modern *es-Salt*, just south of Mount Gilead. See on Deut. iv, 43; Josh. xiii, 26; and Judges x, 17. **Jair the son**

Jair the son of Manasseh, which *are* in Gilead; to him *also pertained* <sup>1</sup> the region of Argob, which *is* in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls and brazen bars: **14** Ahinadab the son of Iddo *had* <sup>10</sup> Mahanaim: **15** Ahimaaz *was* in Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife: **16** Baanah the son of Hushai *was* in

<sup>k</sup> Asher and in Aloth: **17** Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar: **18** Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin: **19** Geber the son of Uri *was* in the country of Gilead, *in* <sup>1</sup> the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and *he* <sup>1</sup> *was* the only officer which *was* in the land.

*i* Deut. 3. 4.—10 Or, *to Mahanaim*.

*k* Josh. 19. 24, 31.—*l* Deut. 3. 8.

**of Manasseh**—See on Num. xxxii, 41.

**Argob**—The region north of Mount Gilead, and east and southeast of the sea of Galilee. See on Deut. iii, 4. "The Bedouins familiarly speak of this whole district as Arkoob or Argoob. Thus they call the mountain on which Um Keis stands Argoob Um Keis; and although this word is applied to any rough, mountainous country, I have nowhere else heard it thus used in common conversation; and since the kingdom or district of Argob was in this immediate neighbourhood, I think it nearly certain that we have the identical name still preserved among these primitive inhabitants."—*Thomson*.

**Bashan**—The vast region, of which Argob was but a part, extending from Mount Hermon in the north to the Jabbok on the south, and from the Jordan eastward to the desert. See on Deut. iii, 3. **Threescore great cities with walls and brazen bars**—"Such a statement seems all but incredible. It would not stand the arithmetic of Bishop Colenso for a moment. But with my own eyes I have seen that it is literally true. The cities are there to this day. Some of them retain the ancient names recorded in the Bible. Bashan is literally crowded with towns and large villages, and though the vast majority of them are deserted, they are not ruined. Many of the houses in the ancient cities of Bashan are perfect, as if only finished yesterday. The walls are sound, the roofs unbroken, the doors, and even the window shutters, in their places. The walls are from five to eight feet thick, built of large squared blocks of basalt; the roofs are formed of slabs of the same material, hewn like planks, and reaching from wall to wall; the very doors and window shutters are of stone, hung upon

pivots projecting above and below. Some of these ancient cities have from two to five hundred houses still perfect, but not a man to dwell in them. On one occasion, from the battlements of the castle of Salcah, I counted some thirty towns and villages, dotting the surface of the vast plain, many of them almost as perfect as when they were built, and yet for more than five centuries there has not been a single inhabitant in one of them."—PORTER, *Giant Cities of Bashan*.

**14. Mahanaim**—The place beyond the Jordan where Jacob met the angels, and where Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, reigned two years. Its modern name is *Mahneh*. See on 2 Sam. ii, 8, and Gen. xxxii, 2.

**15. Naphtali**—For notice of the territory of this tribe, see at Joshua xix, 32–39.

**16. Hushai**—Perhaps the friend of David mentioned in 2 Samuel xv, 32.

**Asher**—See at Joshua xix, 24–31.

**Aloth**—or *Baaloth*, as Septuagint and Vulgate read the word. It is now unknown.

**17. In Issachar**—See at Josh. xix, 17–23.

**18. Benjamin**—See at Josh. xviii, 11–28.

**19. The country of Gilead**—The vast mountainous tract east of the Jordan, and south of Bashan. Here it is spoken of as including at least a part of Bashan. See on Deut. iii, 13, and references. But the whole of Gilead was not under this Geber. His son and Ahinadab had their districts also in Gilead, (verses 13, 14;) but with that exception, the son of Uri was the only officer in all this vast tract of country, an evidence of the profound peace throughout Solomon's dominions.





**20** Judah and Israel *were* many, <sup>m</sup> as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, <sup>a</sup> eating and drinking, and making merry. **21** And <sup>o</sup> Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from <sup>p</sup> the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: <sup>a</sup> they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. **22** And Solomon's <sup>11</sup> pro-

<sup>m</sup> Gen. 22, 17; chap. 3, 8; Prov. 14, 28.—<sup>a</sup> Psa. 73, 3, 7; Micah 4, 4.—<sup>o</sup> 2 Chron. 9, 26; Psa. 72, 8.—<sup>p</sup> Gen. 15, 18; Josh. 1, 4.

#### SOLOMON'S WEALTH AND WISDOM, 20-34.

**20.** The statements of this verse are calculated to enhance in the mind of the reader the glory of Solomon's reign. "The general tone of the records of his reign is that of jubilant delight, as though it were indeed a golden day following on the iron and brazen age of the warlike David."—*Stanley*. **As the sand**—Thus fulfilling the promise made to Abraham. See marginal references. **Eating... drinking... making merry**—Evidences of a happy, peaceful, and prosperous administration.

**21. The river**—The great Euphrates, far to the east. Compare Gen. xv, 18. **Land of the Philistines**—On the Mediterranean coast to the west of Judea. **Border of Egypt**—At the south. Within these limits there were now many kingdoms. **Brought presents, and served Solomon**—These subject kingdoms doubtless preserved their separate organization and nationality, as when independent, but were ever ready both to contribute to the annual revenues of Solomon, and also to furnish, when occasion offered, their quota of men for any public service. Thus, too, the fame of Solomon became registered in the records of the kings of the East. Ezra iv, 20.

**22. Thirty measures of fine flour**—Or thirty *cors*, about three hundred and forty bushels. **Threescore measures of meal**—About seven hundred bushels.

**23. Twenty oxen out of the pastures**—Such as had been taken immediately from the field, in distinction from such as had been stallfed. It is said that one hundred oxen were daily

vision for one day was thirty <sup>12</sup> measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, **23** <sup>r</sup> Ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl. **24** For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphseh even to <sup>13</sup> Azzah, over <sup>a</sup> all the kings on this

<sup>q</sup> Psa. 68, 29; 72, 10, 11.—<sup>11</sup> Heb. *bread*.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *cors*.—<sup>r</sup> Neh. 5, 17, 18.—<sup>13</sup> That is, *Gaza*.—<sup>s</sup> Psa. 72, 11.

slaughtered for the kings of Persia; and Tavernier relates that as many as five hundred sheep and lambs were daily consumed at the court of the Sultan. **Harts... roebucks... fallow deer**—Various species of the genus *cervus*, or deer family. See Deut. xii, 15, and xiv, 5. **Fatted fowl**—Domesticated poultry.

**24. On this side the river**—Literally, *beyond the river*. The phrase designates the country west of the Euphrates; and in the time of our author it had already come to be used in this fixed geographical sense. Compare the phrase *beyond Jordan*, Josh. i, 14, note. So, says Rawlinson, "a Gaul, writing at Narbo or Lugdunum under the early Roman empire, must have spoken of his own country as *Gallia transalpina*." Compare Ezra iv, 10, note. **Tiphseh**—Formerly a large and important city on the western bank of the Euphrates, more than three hundred miles above Babylon; the Thapsacus of the Greeks and Romans, and the modern *Suriyeh*. Here was the great crossing place for the armies or caravans, and perhaps Solomon's occupation of the place was for the purpose of establishing commercial intercourse with Central Asia. "A paved causeway is visible on either side of the river at Suriyeh, and a long line of mounds may be traced, disposed, something like those of Nineveh, in the form of an irregular parallelogram. These mounds probably mark the site of the ancient city."—*G. Rawlinson*. **Azzah**—The same as Gaza, and a more correct form of anglicising the Hebrew name. On Gaza, the chief capital of the Philistines, see at Gen. x, 19, and Judges xvi, 1. **Over all the kings**—Many petty kings dwell

side the river: and <sup>1</sup>he had peace on all sides round about him. **25** And Judah and Israel <sup>2</sup>dwelt <sup>14</sup>safely, <sup>3</sup>every man under his vine and under his fig tree, <sup>4</sup>from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon. **26** And <sup>5</sup>Solomon had forty thousand stalls of <sup>6</sup>horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. **27** And <sup>7</sup>those officers provided victuals for king Solomon, and for all

<sup>t</sup> 1 Chron. 22. 9.—<sup>u</sup> See Jer. 23. 6.—<sup>14</sup> Heb. confidently.—<sup>v</sup> Micah 4. 4; Zech. 3. 10.—<sup>w</sup> Judges 20. 1.—<sup>x</sup> Chap. 10. 26; 2 Chron. 1. 14;

that came unto king Solomon's table, every man in his month: they lacked nothing. **28** Barley also and straw for the horses and <sup>15</sup>dromedaries brought they unto the place where <sup>16</sup>the officers were, every man according to his charge. **29** And <sup>17</sup>God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that <sup>18</sup>is on the sea shore. **30** And Solomon's

<sup>9</sup>. 25.—<sup>y</sup> See Deut. 17. 16.—<sup>z</sup> Verse 7.—<sup>15</sup> Or, mules, or, swift beasts, Esth. 8. 14; Micah 1. 13.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 3. 12.

in this territory. Compare note on Judges i, 7.

**25. Dwelt safely**—In security and confidence, as opposed to continuous alarms from war or civil discord. **Every man under his vine and under his fig tree**—A picture of the utmost national and domestic tranquillity, happiness, and comfort; and used by the prophets to portray the peace and happiness of Messiah's day. Compare marginal references. **From Dan even to Beersheba**—The common designation of the whole extent of the land from north to south. See at Judges xx, 1.

**26. Forty thousand stalls of horses**—Most interpreters have regarded this as a corruption in the text, and have thought to emend it by substituting the reading of 2 Chron. ix, 25, *four thousand*. But this is a doubtful emendation. True, 40,000 seems a very large number, and may be an error; but 4,000 seems too small a number to require 12,000 horsemen. Then the reading in Chronicles is somewhat different from this. There it says he had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots, which may mean that each stall that contained a chariot might also have several horses. But while at this late day it may be impossible to settle this question of numbers, it is still clear that Solomon multiplied horses in Israel, and thereby transgressed the law prescribed for kings in Deut. xvii, 16. **Twelve thousand horsemen**—The word פָּרָשִׁים, here and often elsewhere rendered *horsemen*, is also used in the sense of *steeds*; *riding horses*. It usually means *cavalry*, including both horse and rider.

**27. Those officers**—That is, the officers named in verses 7–19.

**28. Dromedaries**—The dromedary differs from the camel in being of a finer and more elegant form, having one hump on the back instead of two, and in being trained for greater speed. But the Hebrew word רֶכֶשׁ means a *swift-courser*, or race-horse, and in Micah i, 13, is rendered *swift-beast*, one that was used with the chariot, and so could hardly be the dromedary. In Esther viii, 10, 14, it is rendered *mule*, but *swift-courser* would be better. **Where the officers were**—The Septuagint and Vulgate read, *where the king was*. But it is still better simply to supply *they*, referring to the horses and coursers. The barley and straw were brought where the horses were kept by those who had this matter in charge, **every man according to his charge**—כַּמִּשְׁפָּטוֹ, literally, *according to his judgment*; that is, according to the amount which it was decided each should bring.

**29. Largeness of heart**—The heart, in Scripture, is the innermost center of man's natural condition and life. It is the seat of desires, of love, of hatred. It thinks, perceives, understands, deliberates, judges; and thus becomes the storehouse of all that is seen, heard of, or experienced. Compare Luke i, 66 and references. So Solomon became a man of profound thought, of deep understanding, with vast powers of judgment, and a broad and diversified experience. **As the sand**—A proverbial expression denoting the multiplicity and fulness of his knowledge and wisdom.

wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children <sup>b</sup> of the east country, and all <sup>c</sup> the wisdom of Egypt. **31** For he was <sup>d</sup> wiser than all men: <sup>e</sup> than Ethan the Ezrahite, <sup>f</sup> and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. **32** And <sup>g</sup> he spake three thousand proverbs: and his <sup>h</sup> songs were a thousand

and five. **33** And he spake of trees, from <sup>i</sup> the cedar tree that <sup>j</sup> is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. **34** And <sup>k</sup> there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. 25. 6. — <sup>c</sup> Acts 7. 22. — <sup>d</sup> Chap. 3. 12. — <sup>e</sup> 1 Chron. 15. 19; Psa. 89, title. — <sup>f</sup> 1 Chron. 2. 6; 6. 33; 15. 19; Psa. 88, title.

<sup>g</sup> Prov. 1. 1; Eccles. 12. 9. — <sup>h</sup> Cant. 1. 1. — <sup>i</sup> Num. 24. 6; 2 Kings 19. 23; Psa. 92. 12. — <sup>j</sup> Chap. 10. 1; 2 Chron. 9. 1, 23.

**30. The east country** — A term used indiscriminately of all the vast region to the east, northeast, and south-east of Palestine, including Chaldea and Arabia. This East was noted for its wisdom, especially Chaldea for attainments in astronomy and astrology, and the farther East, with Arabia, for expressing thought and sage counsel in proverbs. **Wisdom of Egypt** — Another land still more distinguished for wisdom. Compare Isa. xix. 11; Acts vii. 22. The Egyptians were distinguished for their knowledge of plants and animals, and their skill in geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and other sciences. Herodotus speaks of them as "the wisest of men."

**31. Ethan ... Heman ... Chalcol ... Darda** — These men were well known and distinguished for wisdom in Solomon's time, but to what age they belonged, and to what nation, is by no means clear. They would seem to be identical with the sons of Zerah mentioned in 1 Chron. ii. 6. The eighty-ninth Psalm is ascribed to Ethan, the Ezrahite. **Sons of Mahol** — This seems to oppose the supposition that these wise men are identical with the names of 1 Chron. ii. 6; but מַחֹל, *mahol*, often elsewhere means a dance, and some have conjectured that the meaning here is, *sons of the dance*.

**32. He spake three thousand proverbs** — He seems to have first established among the Hebrews this species of gnomic didactic poetry. Of these three thousand proverbs a very valuable though a comparatively small portion remains in the Book of Proverbs, and, perhaps, also in Ecclesiastes. The remark that he *spake* these prov-

erbs may imply that they were not all *written* or actually recorded, and so, from being preserved only by oral tradition, they either became gradually lost, or their authorship became uncertain. **His songs were a thousand and five** — Being the son of the greatest of human lyrist, the sweet psalmist of Israel, he naturally inherited the gift of poetry and song. Of these thousand and five songs there now remain but the seventy-second and one hundred and twenty-seventh Psalms and the Canticles, though the authorship of the latter is a controverted question. But though most of the Proverbs and Songs of Solomon are lost to us, their silent influences, flowing through unseen channels, may have greatly affected both the ancient and modern literature of the East, and may still be studied in the apocryphal books of Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon.

**33. He spake of trees... beasts... fowl... creeping things... fishes** — He enjoyed rare opportunities for becoming familiar with the various species of both the animal and vegetable creation. His extended commerce with all nations brought to him specimens of all rare trees, plants, and animals. Cedars he multiplied in his own land like sycamores; (chap. x. 27; his navies and caravans supplied him apes and peacocks, horses and mules, and spices. Chap. x. 22, 25. Compare Sol. Songs iv. 13, 14. That he composed and wrote scientific treatises on botany and natural history, as many commentators have assumed, is not necessarily the meaning of this verse. In the concluding chapters of Job, and in many of the Psalms and Proverbs, we

## CHAPTER V. AND <sup>a</sup>Hiram king of Tyre sent his

*a* Verses 10, 18;

find many wise sayings and parabolic allusions based on the wisdom of God as displayed in the creation; and it seems more natural, on the whole, to suppose Solomon's sayings about trees, etc., to have been of this character. And so Irenæus observes that Solomon "expounded *psychologically* the wisdom of God which is manifest in creation." So also Josephus: "He *spoke a parable upon* every sort of tree, from the hyssop to the cedar; and in like manner, also, about beasts, and about all sorts of living creatures, whether upon the earth, or in the seas, or in the air; for he was not unacquainted with any of their natures, nor omitted inquiries about them, but described them all *like a philosopher*, and demonstrated his exquisite knowledge of their several properties." And so his sayings on these subjects were probably more of the character of natural theology than of natural science. No wonder that his fame went through all lands, and attracted, among others, the queen of Sheba to his court. Chapter x.

### CHAPTER V.

In this chapter we have an account of Solomon's preparations for building the temple, and the three following chapters describe the building and dedication of that celebrated edifice. It was the mighty work which, above all others, shed a glory over the reign of Solomon. The temple was to be the central seat of national worship and religious interest, and was designed thenceforth to mould the religious life and knowledge of the Hebrew race, and to stand a type and symbol of the Christian Church—that great spiritual temple of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone. This great work was not a sudden device of Solomon. It had been planned by David, to whom its first idea had come like an inspiration from the Almighty. 2 Sam. vii, 2. He would not have the ark dwelling in curtains, while he himself

servants unto Solomon; for he had heard that they had anointed him king

2 Chron. 2, 3, *Hiram*.

occupied a house of cedar. And though not permitted to build, in his day, a worthy dwelling for the mighty God of Jacob, he nevertheless prepared by Divine counsel its pattern, and carefully committed it to his son Solomon. 1 Chron. xxviii, 11, 12, 19. Compare the notes on 2 Sam. vii, 1–17. He also prepared the place for its erection on Ornan's threshingfloor, where he had seen the angel of the Lord. 2 Chron. iii, 1; 2 Sam. xxiv, 17.

In the next two chapters, and their parallels in Chronicles, we learn the most that is known of this celebrated structure, built so long ago, and long ago destroyed. "There is no building of the ancient world which has excited so much attention since the time of its destruction as the temple which Solomon built at Jerusalem, and its successor as rebuilt by Herod. Its spoils were considered worthy of forming the principal illustration of one of the most beautiful of Roman triumphal arches; and Justinian's highest architectural ambition was, that he might surpass it. Throughout the middle ages it influenced to a considerable degree the forms of Christian churches, and its peculiarities were the watchwords and rallying points of all associations of builders. Since the revival of learning in the sixteenth century its arrangements have employed the pens of many learned antiquarians, and architects of several countries have taxed their science in trying to reproduce its forms.

But it is not only to Christians that the temple of Solomon is so interesting; the whole Mohammedan world look to it as the foundation of all architectural knowledge, and the Jews still recall its glories, and sigh over their loss with a constant tenacity, unmatched by that of any other people to any other building of the ancient world."—FERGUSON, in *Smith's Dictionary*.

### NEGOTIATIONS WITH HIRAM, 1–12.

1. **Hiram king of Tyre**—Whether this Hiram was the same king of Tyre

in the room of his father: <sup>b</sup>for Hiram was ever a lover of David. **2** And <sup>c</sup>Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, **3** Thou knowest how that David my father could not build a house unto the name of the Lord his God, <sup>d</sup>for the wars which were about him on every side, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet. **4** But now the Lord my God hath given me <sup>e</sup>rest on every side,

so that there is neither adversary nor evil occurrent. **5** 'And, behold, I <sup>f</sup>purpose to build a house unto the name of the Lord my God, <sup>g</sup>as the Lord spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build a house unto my name. **6** Now therefore command thou that they hew me <sup>h</sup>cedar trees out of Lebanon; and my servants shall be

<sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. 5. 11; 1 Chron. 14. 1; Amos 1. 9.—  
<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. 2. 3.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Chron. 22. 8; 28. 3.—  
<sup>e</sup> Chap. 4. 24; 1 Chron. 22. 9.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Chronicles 2. 4.—1 Heb. say.—<sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 13; 1 Chronicles 17. 12; 22. 10.—<sup>h</sup> 2 Chronicles 2. 8, 10.

who supplied David with cedars and carpenters to build his royal palace, (see 2 Sam. v, 11,) some have presumed to doubt. But the positive statement of this verse, that Hiram was ever a lover of David, and the words of Solomon's message, (2 Chron. ii, 3,) "As thou didst deal with David my father, and didst send him cedars to build him a house," seem clearly to put it beyond all question that the same Hiram who furnished David materials for his palace assisted Solomon in the building of the temple. No one would ever have thought otherwise had not Menander of Ephesus, according to Josephus, (*Jos. against Apion*, 1, 18,) affirmed that Hiram reigned thirty-four years; and this seems not long enough to meet the demands of the scriptural narrative. According to 1 Kings ix, 10, he was still living in the twentieth year of Solomon's reign, and this would leave only fourteen years in which to have had his intercourse with David. Accordingly David, who reigned in all but forty years, and seven of these at Hebron, must have reigned nineteen years at Jerusalem before he began to build his royal palace there, a supposition altogether improbable. In view, therefore, of the consistency and positive statements of the scriptural narrative, we conclude that Menander's chronology is wrong, and that Hiram's reign must have extended over a large portion of that of both David and Solomon. **His servants**—Ambassadors.

**3. My father could not build**—There was a moral incapacity in David on account of his many wars, or, as expressed in 1 Chron. xxii, 8, because he had shed so much blood in the sight

of the Lord. He that builds the Lord's house must not be a noted shedder of blood. Solomon assumes that Hiram knew this.

**4. Neither adversary nor evil occurrent**—No adversary like the Philistines or Moabites, who were formerly anxious to reduce Israel to a state of subjection; no evil incident like the rebellion of Absalom, or the curse of famine or plague.

**5. As the Lord spake unto David**—See 2 Sam. vii, 12, 13, and the notes there.

**6. Cedar trees out of Lebanon**—The cedars of Lebanon are the most celebrated of all the trees of Scripture, the monarchs of the vegetable kingdom. The prophets refer to them as emblems of greatness, majesty, and splendour. Ezekiel, in his prophecy, (chap. xxxi,) presents us with a most graphic description of their grandeur and beauty when he makes them representatives of the Assyrian power and glory. The wood was used for beams, pillars, boards, masts of ships, and carved images. Not only did David and Solomon import it for their building purposes, but the kings of Assyria and Persia, and perhaps of other nations, did the same. This extensive use of the cedar of Lebanon makes it clear that in ancient times this mountain must have been largely covered with forests of this timber. At present only one considerable group, embosomed in a magnificent recess among the loftiest heights of the mountain, and which is generally known, has been often visited and described by travellers. Other groves, however, have been found in other less

with thy servants: and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that *there is* not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto

the Sidonians. **7** And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, *Blessed be the Lord this day, which hath given unto David a wise son over*

2 Heb. say. — i Chap. 10. 9;

2 Chron. 2. 11, 12; 9. 7, 8.

frequented parts of the mountain. The modern cedar of Lebanon is usually from fifty to eighty feet high, and often covers with its branches, when standing alone, a space the diameter of which is greater than the height of the tree. It is an evergreen, and its leaves are produced in tufts. Its branches, disposed in layers, spread out horizontally, and form, as they approach the top, a thick pyramidal head. All this corresponds closely with Ezekiel's description, chap. xxxi, 3. The profane writers represent the cedar wood as specially noted for its durability, and the cedar roof of the great temple of Diana at Ephesus is said to have lasted four hundred years. **Hew timber**

**like unto the Sidonians**—"The Sidonians," writes Strabo, who lived about the time of Christ, "are said by historians to excel in various kinds of art, as the words of Homer also imply. Besides, they cultivate science and study astronomy and arithmetic. It is thought that geometry was introduced into Greece from Egypt, and astronomy and arithmetic from Phenicia. At present the best opportunities are afforded in these cities for acquiring a knowledge of these and of all other branches of philosophy." On Zidon, or Sidon, see at Gen. x, 19, Josh. xi, 8.

כָּרַת, here rendered to *hew*, means rather to *cut down*, or to *fell*. Merely for the felling and treatment of the timber great skill was required. Ac-



CEDAR OF LEBANON.

cording to Vitruvius, a contemporary of Julius Cæsar, and author of a celebrated treatise on architecture, timber must be cut in the autumn or in the winter, when it is free from a moisture which is apt to make it rot, and it should be cut in such a manner as to allow the sap to distil away. It should never be exposed to a hot sun, high winds, or rain, nor drawn through the dew; and it should be in like manner guarded for three years before being used in building. Probably these and other similar precautions gave the Sidonians their fame for skill in felling timber.

**7. Hiram heard...and said, Blessed be the Lord**—How far this implies that the king of Tyre was a worshipper of the true God is quite uncertain. His expressions of reverence

this great people. **8** And Hiram sent to Solomon, saying, I have <sup>s</sup>considered the things which thou sentest to me for: and I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. **9** My servants shall bring *them* down from Lebanon unto the sea; <sup>s</sup>and I will convey them by sea in floats unto the place that thou shalt <sup>s</sup>appoint me,

3 Hebrew, *heard*.—*k* 2 Chronicles 2. 16.

4 Hebrew, *send*.

for Jehovah, as Creator of heaven and earth, are still stronger in the parallel passage 2 Chron. ii, 11. He evidently acknowledged Jehovah and worshipped him as God, but, like the Samaritans of a later age, (2 Kings xvii, 33,) he may have feared the Lord and at the same time have worshipped the various gods of the heathen. In so far, however, as Hiram, a heathen king, was brought to a knowledge of the God of Israel, and worshipped him, and helped to build his holy temple, so far these things may be typical of events in Messiah's day. The Greater than Solomon, in the building of his spiritual temple builds not with Jews alone. It is significant that the only time Jesus travelled on his works of mercy beyond the limits of the land of Israel was to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Mark vii, 24. His human ministry was not to be among the Gentiles; but by this one miracle in the regions beyond Israel he would indicate his purpose to gather elect and precious stones from all nations, and build them up together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.

#### 8. Timber of cedar, and... of fir

—The *fir* tree is often mentioned in connection with the *cedar*. It was a lofty, ornamental tree that grew on Lebanon, (2 Kings xix, 23; Isa. lx, 13,) and was used in making ships, (Ezek. xxvii, 5,) spears, (Nahum ii, 3,) and musical instruments, (2 Sam. vi, 5.) The Hebrew name is *berosh*, (בְּרוֹשׁ)

and may also designate the *cypress* or the *pine*. In 2 Chron. ii, 8, *almug trees* are mentioned besides cedar and fir, clearly showing that Lebanon was noted for other kinds of celebrated wood besides the cedar. But the al-

and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive *them*: and thou shalt accomplish my desire, <sup>s</sup>in giving food for my household. **10** So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees *according* to all his desire. **11** <sup>m</sup>And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand <sup>s</sup>measures of wheat for food to his household, and twenty measures

<sup>l</sup> See Ezra 3. 7; Ezek. 27. 17; Acts 12. 20.  
<sup>m</sup> 2 Chron. 2. 10.—<sup>s</sup> Heb. *cors*.



CYPRESS TREES.

mug trees furnished by Hiram were of a quality inferior to those which Solomon subsequently obtained from Ophir. See on chap. x, 12.

**9. By sea in floats**—The timber was cut on the western sides of Lebanon, and thence conveyed, probably by beasts of burden, to the Mediterranean Sea; there it was bound together in rafts, and floated along the coast to Joppa, and thence conveyed again overland to Jerusalem. 2 Chron. ii, 16. The timber was probably hewn out and prepared for use in the mountain, thus facilitating transportation. **Food for my household**—Provisions for the royal court of Tyre. Compare Solomon's provision, chap. iv, 22, 23.

**11. Twenty thousand measures of wheat**—Or twenty thousand *cors*, about 222,000 bushels. **Pure oil**—Or *beaten oil*, the purest and finest kind, such as came from the olives by mere

of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. **12** And the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, "as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league together.

**13** And king Solomon raised a <sup>6</sup>levy out of all Israel; and the levy was thirty thousand men. **14** And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month by courses: a month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home: and

*n* Chap. 3, 12.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *tribute* of men.  
*o* Chap. 4, v.

pounding and not by pressing. This was for Hiram's household; but besides this, according to 2 Chron. ii, 10, he furnished Hiram's servants, the hewers, 20,000 cors of beaten wheat, 20,000 cors of barley, 20,000 baths of wine, and 20,000 baths of oil; the last evidently common oil, not the beaten. Hence there is no discrepancy between these passages, for they refer to different things. The land of Israel abounded in grain and oil, while in this respect Phenicia was poor. Compare Acts xii, 20.

THE LABORERS AT LEBANON, 13-18.

**13. Levy**—See note on chap. iv, 6, and 2 Sam. xx, 24.

**14. Ten thousand a month by courses**—Solomon carefully observed the law (Lev. xxv, 39-46) in not making bondmen of his own people, but of the strangers of the land. Compare chap. ix, 21, 22. The Israelitish labourers in Lebanon were allowed two months in three to be at home.

**15. Threescore and ten thousand**—These, and the others mentioned in this verse and the following, were not Israelites, but foreigners dwelling in the land. The whole number, according to 2 Chron. ii, 17, was 153,600. Of these 70,000 bare burdens, 80,000 were hewers, and the remaining 3,600 were overseers of the others' work, thus making one overseer to about every forty men.

**16. Besides the chief of Solomon's officers**—Which numbered in all 550, (chap. ix, 23,) of which, however, 250 seem to have been Israelites, (2 Chron. viii, 9, 10,) and the other 300 foreigners. These last, added to the

<sup>o</sup>Adoniram was over the levy. **15** And Solomon had threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in the mountains; **16** Besides the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work. **17** And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and <sup>q</sup>hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. **18** And Sol-

*p* Chap. 9, 21; 2 Chron. 2, 17, 18.  
*q* 1 Chron. 22, 2.

3,300 mentioned in this verse, make up the 3,600 of 2 Chron. ii, 18.

**17. And they brought**—**אֲבָרֶן**, they

quarried out, great stones. The reference is to the digging of the stones from the quarry, not to their transportation. **Great stones, costly stones, hewed stones**—Literally, *They quarried out great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house of hewn stones.* That is, the great costly stones were dug out for the purpose of being hewn or squared, that the foundation might be laid with stones thus squared, and not with rough stones. Josephus says: "The king laid the foundation of the temple very deep in the ground, and the materials were strong stones, and such as would resist the force of time. These were to unite themselves with the earth, and become a basis and sure foundation to sustain with ease those vast superstructures and precious ornaments whose own weight was to be not less than the weight of those other high and heavy buildings which the king designed to be very ornamental and magnificent." Great stones are found in the walls of modern Jerusalem which measure from seventeen to over thirty feet in length, and vary in thickness from four to six and a half feet. They are doubtless some remains of the ancient temple. Dr. Robinson, who measured many of them, remarks that it is not only their great size, but also "the manner in which they are hewn, that gives them a peculiar character. In common parlance they are said to be *bevelled*; which means that after the whole face has first been hewn and squared, a narrow strip

omon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew *them*, and the 'stonesquarers :

7 Or, *Giblites* :

along the edge is cut down a quarter or half an inch lower than the rest of the surface. The face of the wall of such stones has the appearance of many panels."

18. **The stonesquarers** — Rather, as in the margin, *the Giblites*, whose city, Gebal, lay on the seacoast, and whose land lay in the vicinity of Lebanon. See on Josh. xiii, 5. According to Ezek. 27, 9, they were skilled in ship building. In one of the ravines of Lebanon, which opens at the port of the ancient Gebal, Tristram discovered extensive cedar groves; and observes that the Giblites probably cut and launched at their own port cedars from this very valley, which would be far more accessible to them than those on the distant inland moraines and snow-covered heights.

## CHAPTER VI.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE TEMPLE, 1-38.

The first and greatest work of Solomon was the building of the temple. David had purposed in his heart to build such a house for Jehovah, and made vast preparations for it, but was divinely informed that the great enterprise was to be carried out not by himself, but by his son Solomon. 1 Chron. xxii, 6-19; xxviii, 10-21. The pattern was, in its principal parts, substantially a repetition of the tabernacle; but in its architectural details it was doubtless modelled, in some degree, after the great Phœnician, Assyrian, Babylonian, and perhaps Egyptian temples of that age; drawing more or less from all these sources: for the science of architecture seems never to have received much attention among the Hebrews. Their fathers dwelt in tents; and long after their settlement in Canaan they continued to use the same style of dwellings, as something hereditary which they were loth to abandon. David called in the aid of Phœnician architects and workmen in building his own palace on Zion, and Solomon did

so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.

as Ezek. 27. 9.

the same in building the temple. And to the Phœnician artists we may reasonably believe were largely left the minor architectural designs and finish. But the great works of Phœnician architecture have perished; and all present attempts at a complete restoration of the temple from supposed analogies in Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, or Egyptian monuments, are of doubtful value. Such analogies are of the first importance in the study of comparative architecture, and will greatly help in determining some of the principal parts of the temple; but a restoration of the whole edifice from those sources must be to a great extent conjectural. Our principal authority is the Hebrew text of the Scripture; and a careful study of this, together with the aid of comparative architecture, will enable us to present a substantially correct ground-plan, and some other important features, both of the temple and the palace of Solomon. Beyond this it seems not wise to go; for one might as well attempt to portray a living man from a tolerably well preserved skeleton, as to restore all the details of an ancient Jewish building from a mere verbal description compared with the remains of Persian, Assyrian, and Egyptian architecture—especially when the architects employed belonged to neither of these nations.

The SITE of the temple was Ornan's threshing-floor on Mount Moriah, where the angel of Jehovah had appeared to David. 2 Chron. iii, 1. There is no question but it stood somewhere within the present enclosure known as the Haram Area, but the exact part of this area has become a matter of dispute. Fergusson, Lewin, and Thrupp locate the temple in the southwest corner; but the older opinion, which seems to be confirmed by the most recent research and the nature of the ground, places it nearly on the site of the Haram esh Shereef, which occupies what must have been the rocky ridge of the ancient mountain. Captain Warren ob-

## CHAPTER VI.

**A**ND "it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month

a 2 Chron. 3. 1, 2. — b Acts 7. 47.

erves: "It seems incredible that the temple, a building which was so conspicuous, and which was to perform such an important part in the fortifications of the city, should have been placed down in a hole, or even along the sides of the hill, or anywhere except on the ridge, where there is just room enough for it to have stood.... It is well-known that threshingfloors in Palestine are so placed on the ridges of hills, or on the highest points, that, by exposure to every puff of wind, the corn and chaff may be separated."—*Recovery of Jerusalem*, p. 245. See, also, note introductory to chap. vii.

**1. Four hundred and eightieth year**—From this verse it clearly appears that both the year of the exodus from Egypt and the year of the foundation of the temple were memorable epochs in the history of the Hebrew race. See on Exod. xii, 40, 41. Accordingly, the statement of this verse has been a matter of great interest, and the subject of much dispute among chronologists. Most modern chronologists reject the number four hundred and eighty as an early interpolation. The Septuagint reads four hundred and forty, and Josephus five hundred and ninety-two. St. Paul's words in Acts xiii, 18–21, seem clearly to show that the Jews of his time reckoned this period in a way which is inconsistent with the statement of this verse. But, with the exception of the Septuagint, the ancient versions and the Hebrew manuscripts are uniform in support of the present Hebrew text. In view of the involved and conflicting attitude of the many systems of chronology, the question is, perhaps, beyond the possibility of exact decision. Ewald suggests that the four hundred and eighty is a round number made up by assuming twelve generations of forty years each. ( $40 \times 12 = 480$ .) He supposes

Zif, which *is* the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord. **2** And the house which king Solomon built for the Lord, the length thereof *was* threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the

1 Heb. *buillt*. — c See Ezek. 41. 1, &c.

that to every forty years a great hero and an important event were assigned, something like the following: 1.) Moses and the desert. 2.) Joshua and the elders. 3.) Chushan's oppression and Othniel's rule. 4.) The Moabites and Ehud. 5.) The Arameans and Jair. 6.) Jabin and Deborah. 7.) The Midianites and Gideon. 8.) Tola and his foes. 9.) Jephthah and Samson and their foes. 10.) The Philistines and Eli. 11.) Samuel and Saul. 12.) David. **The month Zif**—Corresponding with our May, or more generally, extending from the new moon of April to that of May. The Hebrew *Ziv* means *brightness, blossom*, and so becomes appropriately the name of May—the flower month. According to Rawlinson, (*Herodotus*, vol. i, p. 506,) Zif is the same as the Assyrian *Giv*, which means *bull*, and answers to the zodiacal sign of Taurus. The names of the Jewish months, and the approximately corresponding months with us, are as follows:

1. Abib (Nisan).....	April.
2. Zif (Iyar).....	May.
3. Sivan .....	June.
4. Tammuz.....	July.
5. Ab.....	August.
6. Elul.....	September.
7. Ethanim (Tisri).....	October.
8. Bul (Marcheshvan).....	November.
9. Chisleu.....	December.
10. Tebeth.....	January.
11. Sebat.....	February.
12. Adar.....	March.

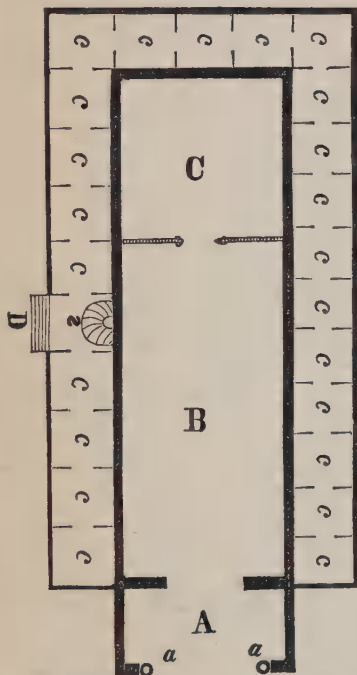
**2. Length...threescore cubits**—Reckoning the cubit at eighteen inches the length would be ninety feet. These dimensions are probably to be understood of the walls on the inside. See note on verse 10. **Breadth...twenty**—Thirty feet, just one third of the length. **Height...thirty cubits**—Forty-five feet, just half the length. Josephus says the height was sixty cubits, but most of his statements on the dimensions of buildings are untrustworthy. A comparison with Exod. xxvi,

height thereof thirty cubits. **3** And the porch before the temple of the nouse, twenty cubits *was* the length thereof, according to the breadth of the

**2** Or, *windows broad within, and narrow without; or, skewed and closed.*

15-23 shows that the dimensions of the temple were exactly double those of the tabernacle. The latter, as described in Exod. xxvi and xxvii, was the model after which David and Solomon planned the temple.

**3. Porch**—The vestibule, or entrance way, in front of the temple, marked A in plan. The height of the porch is not



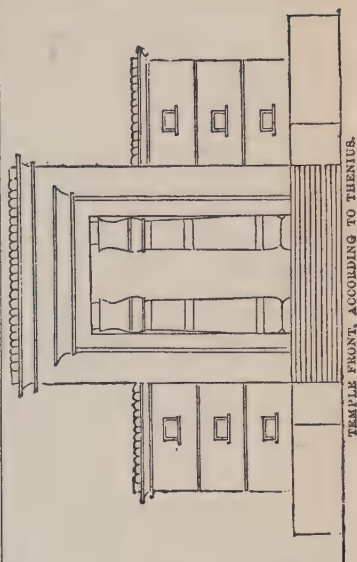
GROUND PLAN OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

here given, but, according to 2 Chron. iii, 4, it was one hundred and twenty cubits, four times the height of the rest of the building, so as to form a sort of steeple or high tower in front. But the number one hundred and twenty is undoubtedly a corrupt reading. It was

house; *and* ten cubits *was* the breadth thereof before the house. **4** And for the house he made <sup>2</sup>windows <sup>a</sup>of narrow lights. **5** And <sup>3</sup>against the wall of

*d* See Ezek. 40. 16; 41. 16.—**3** Or, *upon, or, joining to.*

supported in the lower part by two massive brazen pillars (*a a* in plan) named respectively *Jachin* and *Boaz*, (see on chap. vii, 15 and 2 Chron. iii, 17,) so that the whole front, with its pillars and ornamentation, must have presented a most imposing and splendid *façade*.



**The temple of the house**—The temple, as thus distinguished from the house, is to be understood of the *pro-naos*, or holy place (B in plan) before the oracle. Compare verses 16, 17. **According to the breadth of the house**—Rather, *before the breadth of the house*. That is, the length of the porch extended *before* the breadth of the house, and was precisely equal to it, namely, twenty cubits.

**4. Windows of narrow lights**—Septuagint, *holes of concealed network*. Vulgate, *slanting windows*. The Hebrew is, *windows of closed bars*; that

the house he built \*4 chambers round about, *against* the walls of the house round about, *both* of the temple 'and of the oracle: and he made 6 chambers round about. 6 The nethermost cham-

e See Ezek. 41. 6. —4 Heb. *floors*.  
f Verses 16, 19, 20, 21, 31.

is, of lattice work. They served both for ventilation and for light. The position of these windows is not stated, and we are left to infer that they were set wherever needed, and wherever they would help to enhance the architectural finish and beauty of the building. Hence they were probably both in the upper part of the main building and also in the side-chambers. Compare Ezek. xli, 16.

5. **Against the wall**—On the outside of the main building, as the sequel shows, and built up *against* it, as a lateral building, or lean-to. **Chambers**—The Hebrew word thus rendered, (צִיּוֹת, here and in verse 10 construed as masculine, and taken collectively, as the plural rendering shows, but feminine in the singular,) comes from a root signifying to *spread out*, as in spreading a couch, and is used in the sense of a couch or bed in Gen. xlix, 4; 1 Chron. v, 1; Job xvii, 13; Ps. lxiii, 7; cxxiii, 3. It is evidently here used as an architectural term, and designates a wing or side-building, containing three stories of chambers, and extending around three sides of the entire building, namely, on the south, west, and north. Rawlinson translates it a *lean-to*. Margin, *floors*. Perhaps the nearest equivalent in our language would be a *wing*. **Against the walls**—This expression is repeated, with *walls* in the plural, to introduce the more precise statement that the wing extended around the entire building; that is, the walls **both of the temple and of the oracle**. The oracle was the most holy place, the innermost apartment of the house. (C in plan.) See on verse 16. Its Hebrew name is דְּבִיר, *Debir*, derived by a number of scholars from

דָּבַר, *to speak*; hence *the speaking place*; the place where Jehovah spoke with his people. But Gesenius, Fürst, and

ber was five cubits broad, and the middle was six cubits broad, and the third was seven cubits broad: for without *in the wall* of the house he made 6 narrowed rests round about, that *the beams* should

5 Heb. *ribs*. —6 Heb. *narrowings*,  
or, *rebatelements*.

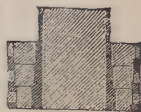
most recent critics, derive it from an Arabic root signifying to *be behind*; hence the hindmost or inner apartment; the adytum. It is often thus distinguished from the holy place before it, (B in plan,) in which case the latter is called, as here, *the temple*, (compare verses 3, 17,) "the house," or "the greater house." 2 Chronicles iii, 5. **Chambers**—This is in the Hebrew a different word from that rendered *chambers* above. The margin

gives the literal meaning, *ribs*, (צִלְעוֹת,) but there is little doubt that the word, as used here and in Ezekiel xli, 6, means *side-chambers*—the different apartments into which the wings above described were partitioned. (c c c in plan.) The purpose which these side-chambers was designed to serve is nowhere stated in the Scriptures. According to Thenius, they were expensively furnished sleeping apartments for the priests. They may also have been used as store-rooms for depositing consecrated gifts and sacred relics.

6. **The nethermost chamber**—That is, the lower story of the wing, containing the first floor of side-chambers. **Five...six...seven cubits broad**—So, as in Ezekiel's temple, there was an enlarging of these side-chambers upward, (Ezek. xli, 7,) so that those of the upper story were two cubits broader than those of the nethermost. This was caused, as is immediately stated, by the **narrowed rests**, or *rebatelements*, (מִנְקָרוֹת, used only here,)

which he built around three sides of the house outside of and against the main wall. The addition by our translators of **the walls and the beams** is somewhat confusing. The latter half of this verse is as follows:

*For rebatelements he gave to the house round about on the outside in order not to fasten*



not be fastened in the walls of the house. **7** And <sup>s</sup>the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither: so that there was neither <sup>h</sup>hammer nor axe nor

any tool of iron heard in the house, while it was in building. **8** The door for the middle chamber *was* in the right <sup>7</sup>side of the house: and they went up with winding stairs into the middle

*g* See Deut. 27. 5, 6; chap. 5. 18.

*h* Isa. 42. 2.—7 Heb. *shoulder*.

*in the walls of the house.* That is, these rebatements were purposely built that the several stories of side-chambers, by resting on such ledges of exterior wall, might not in any way penetrate or detract from the strength and wholeness of the main wall of the temple.

Mr. T. O. Paine, in his work on "Solomon's Temple," propounds a new and ingenious plan of the whole edifice by making these wings and side-chambers consist of galleries on the *inside* of the house, and supported on the outside by three rows of pillars, the pillars varying in height according to the several galleries. But one of his principal arguments is a misinterpretation of Ezek. xli, 7 by making the "enlarging upward" refer to the entire building rather than to the interior of the side-chambers. And his entire plan is open to many and insuperable objections, only a few of which we need here mention: 1.) It is difficult to conceive what purpose such open galleries served; and, so far as we can find, they have no counterpart nor analogy in ancient architecture. 2.) The making of the side-chambers a part of the entire visible interior conflicts with the obvious import of verses 5, 6, and 10 of this chapter, according to which they were built against the outside of the wall. 3.) Mr. Paine's plan makes the walls more of a breastwork or sub-structure than a wall—a low enclosure running round the central part of the building, and not reaching half-way to the roof. Accordingly, the height of the *walls* was not thirty cubits, (as we naturally infer from verse 2,) and the width of the building was not, properly, twenty cubits, but varied with every gallery. 4.) Finally, the whole plan is chiefly drawn from the temple seen in vision by Ezekiel, (chap. xli,) and depends upon the assumption that that temple of vision was an exact pattern of Solomon's temple that had been de-

stroyed by the Chaldeans. This assumption, we think, Mr. Paine utterly fails to establish. It is a theory which is quite generally rejected by the most careful modern expositors, and is therefore, at best, too uncertain and unreliable a guide to a satisfactory restoration of the ancient temple.

**7. Stone made ready before it was brought thither**—Literally, *Stones completed at the quarry*; that is, hewn and shaped for the very spot it was known to be designed to occupy. **Neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard**—This further attests the consummate skill of the Sidonian builders. But this fact, so noticeable in itself, is also deeply symbolical. It indicates the silent but sure and mighty growth of the kingdom of Christ. In his personal ministry he did not cry nor lift up his voice in the street; and his Church, like the silent increase of the mustard seed, rises and spreads, and thus goes on to its completion, every day disclosing more and more the consummate skill and infinite wisdom of the Great Architect, "in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." Eph. ii, 21.

**8. The door for the middle chamber was in the right side**—The middle chamber of the lower story is here meant. The right side of the house would be the south side, and is to be understood of a person facing the same way as the temple, namely, the east. So far as the scripture text gives us any information, this one door in the south side seems to have been the only entrance into all of the side-chambers. (D in plan.) **They went up**—That is, persons who entered the upper stories went up these stairs. **Winding stairs**—Marked *s* in plan. **Middle**—That is, the middle chamber of the middle story. **Out of the middle into the third**—Out of the middle chamber of the mid-

chamber, and out of the middle into the third. **9** 'So he built the house, and finished it, and covered the house <sup>8</sup> with beams and boards of cedar. **10** And then he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house with timber of cedar. **11** And the word of the Lord came to Solomon, saying, **12** Concerning this house which thou art in building, <sup>k</sup> if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then

<sup>i</sup> Verses 14, 38. — <sup>8</sup> Or, the vault beams and the ceilings with cedar. — <sup>k</sup> Chap. 2. 4; 9. 4.

— <sup>l</sup> 2 Samuel 7. 13; 1 Chronicles 22. 10. — <sup>m</sup> Exodus 25. 8; Leviticus 26. 12; Zechariah 2.10:

dle story into the middle chamber of the third story. So the staircase was not on the outside of the house, as is usual in the East, but on the inside. No mention is made of windows in the side-chambers, but this is naturally inferred from verse 4, where see note.

**9. Covered the house**—Made the roof, or covered with a roof, of **beams and boards of cedar**. On the durability of cedar roofs, see note on chap. v. 6. The form or shape of the roof is left entirely uncertain. Many conclude, from the silence of the text, that, like Oriental buildings generally, its roof was flat. Others maintain, that, as it was modelled after the tabernacle, (compare *Wisdom of Solomon*, chapter ix, 8,) its roof was a gable, like that of an ordinary tent.

**10. Chambers . . . five cubits high**—Literally, *Five cubits its height*; that is, each chamber or story was five cubits high from floor to ceiling. "Their flooring and roofing being added, they reached together to about eighteen or twenty cubits in height; so that there would be room for the windows of the temple to be opened out, like clear story windows, above them."—*Wordsworth*. **Rested on the house with timber of cedar**—Rather, *were fastened to* (אָרָז) *the house* by means of cedar beams set into the side-walls or rebatelements described verse 6.

**11. The word of the Lord came to Solomon**—At first sight this and the next three verses seem like an interpolation, or a slightly changed form of what is stated chap. ix, 4, 5. But a closer study will show that this is the

will I perform my word with thee, <sup>1</sup> which I spake unto David thy father: **13** And <sup>m</sup> I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not <sup>n</sup> forsake my people Israel. **14** <sup>o</sup> So Solomon built the house, and finished it. **15** And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar, <sup>8</sup> both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling: and he covered *them* on the inside with wood, and covered the floor of the house with planks of fir. **16** And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house,

2 Corinthians 6. 16; Revelations 21. 3. — <sup>n</sup> Deuteronomy 31. 6. — <sup>o</sup> Verse 38. — <sup>9</sup> Or, *from the floor of the house unto the walls, &c.*; and so verse 16.

manner of the sacred writers. They seem ever conscious that they are writing *sacred* history, and so a communication of this kind, coming to Solomon during the building of the temple, must not be omitted, and is well introduced at this point, where the description turns from the outer to the inner walls.

**14. Solomon built the house, and finished it**—This verse need not be understood as a resuming of the description broken off at verse 10, but rather as referring to the word of the Lord as told in verses 12 and 13. In accordance with that word of encouragement and promise, Solomon went on to build and finish the sacred edifice.

**15. The walls of the house within**—The wainscot. The inside of the walls was panelled with cedar boards, so that no stone was visible within. **Both the floor . . . and the walls**—Rather, *From the floor of the house to the walls of the ceiling*. The side walls were wainscotted from bottom to top with cedar wood, and so too, apparently, the ceiling; but the floor was of fir planks. On the fir-tree, see chap. v, 8.

**16. Twenty cubits on the sides**—Rather, *From the two hinder sides*;

רִבּוֹתַי, "the hindmost, last extreme space, which is conceived of as two hinder sides."—*Fürst*. The inner sanctuary was a perfect cube. See on verse 20. **Both the floor and the walls**—Here again it should be rendered *from the floor to the walls*; but the expression seems to imply **that** all the walls,

both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built *them* for it within, *even* for the oracle, *even* for the <sup>9</sup> most holy place. 17 And the house, that is, the temple before it, was forty cubits long. 18 And the cedar of the house within was carved with <sup>10</sup> knops and <sup>11</sup> open flowers: all was cedar; there was no stone seen. 19 And the oracle

<sup>9</sup> Exod. 26. 33; Lev. 16. 2; chap. 8. 6; 2 Chron. 3. 8; Ezek. 45. 3; Heb. 9. 3.—<sup>10</sup> Or, *gourds*.

(קִירֹת) both of the sides and of the ceiling were covered with cedar boards.

**The oracle**—לִבְנֵי, *the interior place*,

called also the *most holy* or *holy of holies*. The place of greatest sanctity, where the presence and glory of Jehovah were supposed to have their central throne on earth. (C in plan.) See on Exod. xxvi, 33, 34. Here in the temple, as in the tabernacle, was set the ark. Verse 19.

17. **The house, that is, the temple before it**—The temple before the most holy place; the anterior part of the main building after partitioning off twenty cubits from the hinder end for the holy of holies. **Was forty cubits long**, and twenty wide, and thirty high, as stated in verse 2. (B in plan.)

18. **Carved with knops**—Or, *gourds*, as in margin, and as the kindred word is rendered in 2 Kings iv, 39. The carving was an artificial imitation of wild gourds or cucumbers. **Open flowers**—Flowers in full bloom. Hence probably a carved imitation of festoons or garlands.

20. **The oracle in the forefront**—That is, the holy of holies on the inside measured twenty cubits each way.

לִפְנֵי, here rendered *in the forefront*, may be taken as the construct state of פָּנִים, *surface, faces*; and rendered, *As to the faces* (that is, the inside surface) of the oracle, twenty cubits was the length, etc. The construction of the most holy place in the form of a perfect cube had doubtless its typical significance. It was an appropriate symbol of perfection. The solid cube, in whatever way it is set, is always upright, a

he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord. 20 And the oracle in the forefront was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar. 21 So Solomon overlaid the house within

<sup>11</sup> Heb. *openings of flowers*.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *shut up*.—q Exod. 26. 20, 32; 2 Chron. 3. 7, 9.

perfect square on every side, and all sides and angles corresponding perfectly to each other. So this form of the inner sanctuary indicated that the Holy One of Israel dwelleth in perfection. **And so covered**—Better to leave out *so*, and the other words here supplied in the English version, and translate literally, *covered the altar with cedar*. The altar of incense for the tabernacle (see Exodus xxx, 1-10) was made of shittim wood, and overlaid with gold. This altar of Solomon was built, as is here stated, with cedar, and the cedar overlaid with plates of gold. Verse 22. We must not understand that this altar was in the oracle, but, as appears in verse 22, *by or at the oracle*; that is, on the outside and just in front of it. So Moses was commanded to "put it before the vail that is by the ark of the testimony." Exod. xxx, 6. "The altar of incense is mentioned in connexion with the holy of holies," says Wordsworth, "because the incense which was burnt upon it was offered before the vail, and with a view to the Divine Presence enshrined in the holy of holies, and had a special relation to the ark in the oracle. On this altar incense was offered morning and evening, the type of continual prayer."

21. **The house within**—The interior, or most holy place. **Made a partition by the chains of gold**—Literally, *He made chains of gold pass through before the oracle*; or, *he made pass through by chains of gold before the oracle*. The meaning is very doubtful. Thenius thinks the word *vail* has fallen out of the text, and by supplying it reads, *he carried the vail by golden chains over before the oracle*. Gesenius, Ewald, Keil, and Bähr take עֵבֶר, *he made pass*

with pure gold : and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle ; and he overlaid it with gold. **22** And the whole house he overlaid with gold,

*r* Exod. 30. 1, 3, 6.

*through*, in the senso of *bolting*, or fastening: *He closed up or bolted by chains of gold before the oracle*. "But then the question is, What was bolted? According to Calmet and others it was only the door of the oracle, which had two leaves. But in that case it would have been necessary to take away the chains on the day of atonement—a thing nowhere hinted at, and in itself highly improbable. Obviously the bolting chains were not a movable but a fixed contrivance running across the entire wall. They held together the parts of the wall made of cedar, like the bolts on the planks of the tabernacle, (Exod. xxvi, 26,) and likewise represented the oracle as a barred, closed room."—*Bähr*. Some suppose that the partition between the holy and the most holy place was made of cedar beams in the form of a network, and over the whole was hung the great vail mentioned 2 Chron. iii, 14. So the smell of the incense could easily pass from the altar into the oracle. **He overlaid it**—Overlaid the oracle—a repetition from the preceding verse.

**22. The whole house he overlaid with gold**—That is, the whole interior

of the holy place and the most holy was overlaid with gold, like the boards of the tabernacle. Exodus xxvi, 29. The prominence given to the golden covering of the various parts of the temple not only shows the exceeding expensiveness of the building, but also points in symbol to the excellence and preciousness of the Church of the living God. **The whole altar**—The entire outside of the altar, top, sides, and horns, as specified in Exod. xxx, 3. **That was by the oracle**—The

until he had finished all the house : also the whole altar that was by the oracle he overlaid with gold. **23** And within the oracle he made two cherubim

*s* Exod. 37. 7-9 : 2 Chron. 3. 10-12.

golden altar of incense was placed directly in front of the vail that concealed the oracle from view, (Exod. xxx, 6,) and so might be said to *belong to* the oracle. Compare note on verse 20.

**23. Made two cherubim**—The cherubim were composite images significant of all forms of creature life, and symbols of the living presence of Jehovah in all departments of the animal world. Their form is described in the opening vision of Ezekiel. Chap. i, 5-11. Each cherub had four faces and four wings, and every part of their appearance seems to have been symbolical of some aspect or manifestation of Divine energy and power in creature life. Ezekiel's magnificent picture may have added somewhat to the form of the cherubim in the temple, but in all essential particulars they were doubtless substantially the same. The probable form of one of these cherubim is presented in the annexed cut, the eagle face being out of sight. It is evident from their great size that these cherubim were not substituted, as some have thought, for the old cherubim that stood upon the ends of the mercyseat, (Exod. xxv, 18,) for these stood ten cubits

apart, while the mercyseat was only two and a half cubits long. These cherubim were therefore

additional to the smaller and older ones on the ark, and overshadowed them by their vast wings, which reached across the entire oracle. The smaller cherubs looked towards each other over the mercyseat, (Exodus xxv, 20;) these greater ones stood with their faces towards the house, (2 Chron. iii. 13, margin;) that is, the human face, as chief and representative of all, looked towards the greater house



PROBABLE FORM OF THE CHERUBIC TYPE.

of <sup>13</sup>olive tree, each ten cubits high. **24** And five cubits *was* the one wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the uttermost part of the other *were* ten cubits. **25** And the other cherub *was* ten cubits: both the cherubim *were* of one measure and one size. **26** The height of the one cherub *was* ten cubits, and so *was* it of the other cherub. **27** And he set the cherubim within the inner house: and <sup>14</sup>they stretched forth the wings of the cherubim, so that the wing of the one touched the *one* wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall;

<sup>13</sup> Or, *oily*. Hebrew, *trees of oil*.—<sup>14</sup> Exod. 25, 20; 37, 9; 2 Chron. 5, 8.—<sup>14</sup> Or, *the cherubim stretched forth their wings*.

the holy place before the vail. **Olive tree**—Or, *tree of oil*, meaning, perhaps, the wild olive, whose wood is hard and solid, with a fine grain and a pleasing yellowish tint.

**27. Their wings touched one another**—They reached across the entire oracle, the two wings of each cherub covering a space ten cubits broad. Verse 24. "The wings were evidently fastened to the back, and placed close to one another upon the shoulder-blades, so that the small space between their starting-points is not taken into consideration in the calculation of their length."—*Keil*.

**29. Cherubim and palm trees and open flowers**—Similar ornamentation abounds on Assyrian and Persian monuments. It was not without its symbolical meaning. As the cherub represented the fulness of Divine life and power in the animal creation, so the palms and flowers represented the vegetable kingdom. Palms and flowers are ever suggestive of the richest fulness of life, prosperity, and joy. And so the worshippers that were permitted to enter the temple, and gaze upon the walls all covered with these figurative carvings, might ever be reminded that the God who had his special dwelling-place and worship there was not confined to temples, but filled the universe with his creative life and energy. The heaven and heaven of heavens could not contain him, and the whole earth was but his footstool; how, then,

and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house. **28** And he overlaid the cherubim with gold. **29** And he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and <sup>15</sup>open flowers, within and without. **30** And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold, within and without. **31** And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive tree: the lintel and side posts *were* <sup>16</sup>a fifth part of the wall. **32** The <sup>17</sup>two doors also *were* of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubim and palm trees and <sup>18</sup>open flowers, and overlaid *them* with gold, and spread

<sup>15</sup> Heb. *openings of flowers*.—<sup>16</sup> Or, *five-square*.—<sup>17</sup> Or, *leaves of the doors*.—<sup>18</sup> Heb. *openings of flowers*.

could Solomon's temple hold him? His hand had made in actual creation all forms of life and being that were represented on the walls.

**31. The entering of the oracle**—The doorway, or place of entrance. It appears that the oracle had no other opening than this. There was no other door, and there were no windows, for Jehovah would dwell in the thick darkness, (chap. viii, 12,) and thereby indicate to his human worshippers that his ways and his being are past finding out. He makes darkness his pavilion to teach his worshippers the folly of thinking to find out the Almighty to perfection. **The lintel**—**פֶּתַח, pilaster**.

"The projection which always springing, pillar-like, out of adjacent recesses on both sides, fronts toward the space where is the entrance and through passage."—*Fürst*. It would be better, then, to render either *the pilaster of the side-posts*, or, with Keil, to attach *side-posts to pilaster* as an explanatory apposition—the *pilaster, namely, the projecting side-posts*. **A fifth part**—Of the doorway or entrance; not of the wall, as our translators have supplied. The meaning is, that the pilasters on each side of the doorway projected outward in bold relief, and took up one fifth of the passage between the side-posts.

**32. The two doors**—The doors of the oracle seem to have been merely a double door, the two parts closing to-

O. T.

gold upon the cherubim, and upon the palm trees. **33** So also made he for the door of the temple posts of olive tree, <sup>19</sup>a fourth part of the wall. **34** And the two doors were of fir tree: the two leaves of the one door were folding, and the two leaves of the other door were folding. **35** And he carved thereon cherubim and palm trees and open flow-

19 Or, foursquare.—u Ezekiel  
41. 23-25.

wards each other, and therefore not so complicated as the outer door of the temple. Verse 34. They moved on hinges of gold. Chap. vii, 50. In Italy the church doors usually stand open, but the doorway is closed over with a heavy curtain, and such seems to have been the usage in the case of these doors to the oracle.

**33. The door of the temple**—The outer door leading from the porch into the holy place. **A fourth part**—Not of the wall, but of the doorway, as in verse 31. This outer door was probably considerably larger than the one leading to the oracle.

**34. The two leaves**—Herein the doors of the greater and outer room differed from those of the smaller and inner one. Each of the two doors was folding, so that one could enter by merely turning one of the folds or leaves, without opening the whole door.

**36. The inner court**—The temple was surrounded by a double court or enclosure, an inner and an outer. The outer was much larger than the inner court, but the exact size of each it is

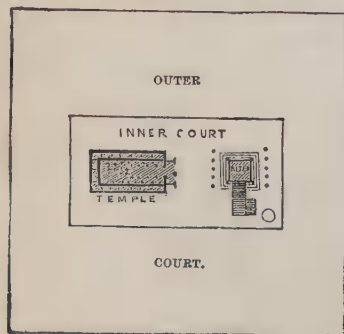
ers: and covered *them* with gold fitted upon the carved work. **36** And he built the inner court with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams. **37** In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid, in the month Zif: **38** And in the eleventh year, in the month Bul, which is the eighth month, was the

v Exod. 27. 9, 19; 38. 9, 20; 2 Chron. 4. 9; 7. 7.  
10 Verse 1.

now impossible to decide. These courts seem also to have been called respectively the upper and the lower, (Jer. xxxvi, 10,) probably because the one occupied a higher terrace than the other. In 2 Chron. iv, 9, the outer is called the *great court*, and the inner the *court of the priests*. **Three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams**—The precise meaning is obscure, but is usually understood of the enclosing wall of the inner court being so constructed that three layers of hewn stone were placed one upon another, and a row of cedar beams fastened on the top, either horizontally or in the form of a railing or balustrade. Perhaps, however, it is better to understand these layers of stone and cedar as forming the pavement of the inner court, and covering its entire area. This would have been the natural way to elevate the platform of the inner court above that of the outer, (compare Jer. xxxvi, 10,) and thus, says Rawlinson, "the temple would be placed, like the Assyrian palaces, on an artificial platform; and the platform, being regarded as a part of the sacred building, would be constructed of the best material."

**37. The month Zif**—See on verse 1.

**38. The month Bul**—According to Fürst and Gesenius, the word *Bul* means *rain*; according to others, *fruit*, *produce*. Hence the *rain-month*, or *fruit-month*, corresponding with November. "Solomon began," says Wordsworth, "to build the temple in the flower-month, and finished the building in the fruit-month. Such is the life of the Church, and of every believer, who is a temple of the Spirit. It begins with flowers but must end in fruit. 'The harvest is the end of the



TEMPLE COURTS.

house finished <sup>20</sup>throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the

fashion of it. So was he <sup>\*</sup>seven years in building it.

<sup>20</sup> Or, *with all the appurtenances thereof, and with all the ordinances thereof.*

α Compare verse 1.

world.' " **Seven years**—And six months, if we reckon more closely.

The temple of Solomon was not distinguished, like the temples of Thebes, for gigantic vastness, for it was not a very large structure, but rather for its harmonious proportions, its beauty and completeness of workmanship, and the excessive costliness of its materials. And the Church, the spiritual house of the living God, is to be specially distinguished for the excellency and completeness of the elect and precious stones which are required to build it; for these are not the many that go in the broad way to destruction, but the comparatively few that find the way of life. Matt. vii, 13, 14.

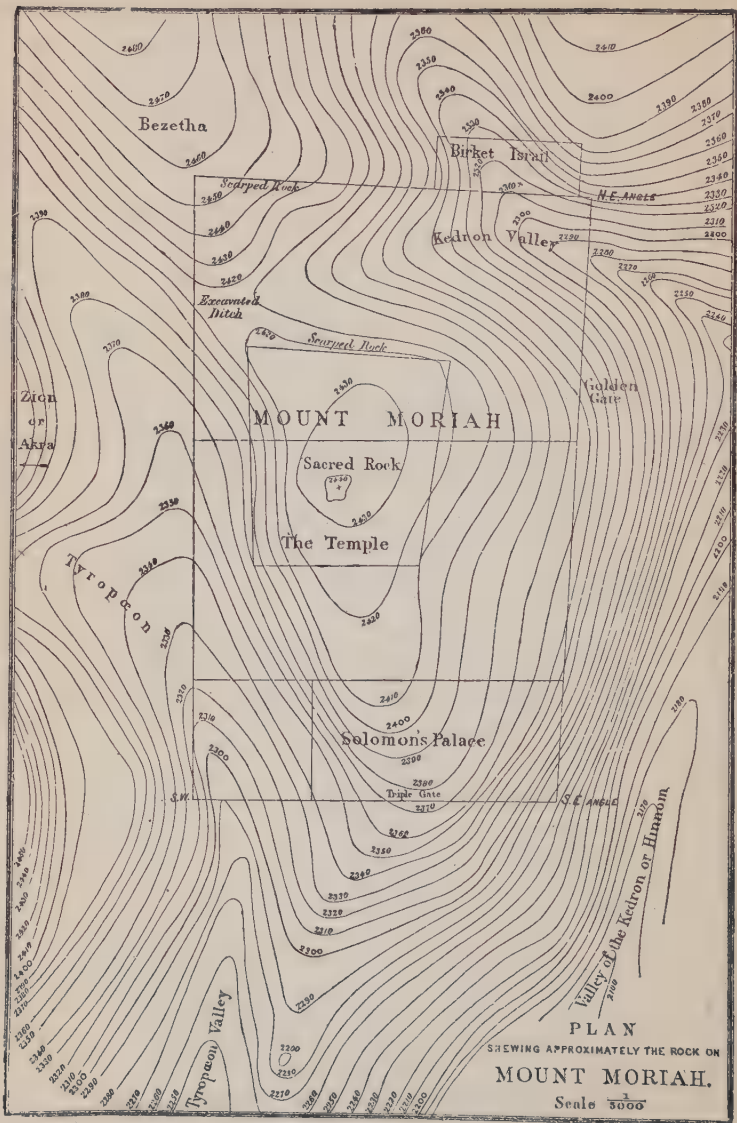
## CHAPTER VII.

### SOLOMON'S PALACE, 1-12.

The description given in this chapter of Solomon's royal house is, on account of its brevity, exceedingly obscure, and we are often obliged to conjecture the meaning, or to gather it from supposed analogies in ancient Oriental architecture. Fergusson, in his article on Solomon's Palace in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*, observes: "The exhumation of the palaces of Nineveh, and the more careful examination of those at Persepolis, have thrown a flood of light on the subject. Many expressions which before were entirely unintelligible are now clear and easily understood; and, if we cannot yet explain every thing, we know at least where to look for analogies, and what was the character, even if we cannot predicate the exact form, of the buildings in question." But this writer, with all his knowledge of architecture, has manifestly given the Hebrew text of this passage little or no study, for he follows the common version, which, in the rendering of a number of words, is unquestionably wrong; and he shows as much deference to Josephus as to the Bible. In these notes we mainly follow Thenius, whose dia-

grams and comments on the text furnish, perhaps, as satisfactory a solution of the difficulties as we may, with present light, expect to find.

The SITE of Solomon's palace is a question yet unsettled. It has been quite generally believed to have occupied the northeastern part of the modern Zion, and to have been connected with the temple-mountain by a bridge over the Tyropœan valley. Here stood a palace erected by the Asmoneans. *Josephus*, xx, 8, 11. Accordingly Barclay writes: "In all Jerusalem there is not a more eligible spot for a palace than the high northeastern cliff of Zion, nearest the temple—the site of the American Christian Mission premises—and accordingly it is at this spot that Josephus locates with so much precision the royal residence of the Asmonean and Herodian sovereigns; nor is there the slightest reason to doubt that it was the royal abode of the Davidian dynasty also; indeed, no other locality is at all consistent with the frequent allusions to the 'king's house' in the Old Testament."—*City of the Great King*, p. 166. This strong statement, however, seems to us unwarranted. What may seem to a modern resident an "eligible spot for a palace," and the selection of it for that purpose by the Asmonean princes, is no proof that the same spot had been selected in the more ancient times of Solomon. On the contrary, the biblical allusions seem rather to locate the king's house on the temple-mountain, and at a lower elevation than the temple itself. So especially the passages which speak of Solomon's bringing his Egyptian wife, after the completion of his palace, "out of the city of David," which was on Zion, (chap. ix, 24; 2 Chron. viii, 11; compare note on chap. iii, 1,) and of "his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord." Chap. x, 5. Compare also 2 Kings xi, 19. We incline, therefore, with a number of recent authorities, to place the palace of



PLAN  
 SHOWING APPROXIMATELY THE ROCK ON  
 MOUNT MORIAH.  
 Scale  $\frac{1}{5000}$

## CHAPTER VII.

**B**UT Solomon was building his own house "thirteen years, and he finished all his house. 2 He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the

α Chap. 9, 10;

Solomon at the southeast corner of the modern Haram area. Here Captain Warren's excavations revealed walls as ancient as the time of Solomon, and here he locates the ancient palace. We furnish on the opposite page a plan of the topography of ancient Moriah, showing the *contour* of the rock, and the probable sites of the temple and the palace, according to the conclusions of Captain Warren. Of course the question cannot at present be settled with absolute certainty. For a detailed discussion of the subject, see *Recovery of Jerusalem*, chaps. xi and xii.

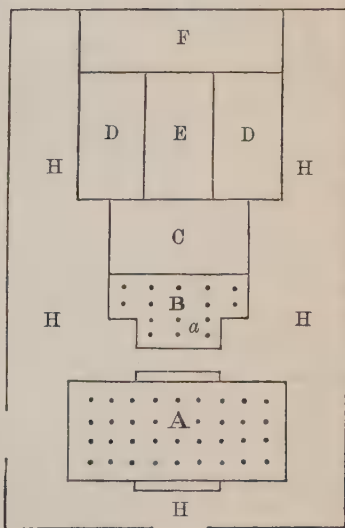
1. **His own house**—His royal palace, as distinguished from the house of Jehovah. **Thirteen years**—Almost twice as long as it took to build the temple. According to Josephus the temple was built in a shorter time because of the extensive preparations for it beforehand, and the greater zeal and Divine co-operation with which Solomon prosecuted it. **All his house**—That is, the entire pile or group of buildings that composed the royal palace. The house of the forest of Lebanon, (verse 2,) the porch of pillars, (verse 6,) the porch of judgment, (verse 7,) the house where he dwelt, (verse 8,) the house for Pharaoh's daughter, (verse 8,) and the several courts, (verses 8, 12,) were all different parts of one and the same great royal palace, and not, as some have supposed, entirely distinct and separate buildings.

2. **He built also**—Rather, *and he built*, for the house here mentioned is not a building entirely distinct from *all his house*, (verse 1,) but an important part of it. **House of the forest of Lebanon**—So called from the vast amount of Lebanon cedar used in building it. This part of the palace was the great hall of state, and was large enough, Josephus says, "to contain a multitude for hearing causes and taking cognizance of suits." In it also were depos-

length thereof *was* a hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams upon the pillars. 3 And

2 Chron. 8, 1.

ited the king's wondrous targets and shields of beaten gold. Chap. x, 16, 17. It was one hundred and fifty feet long by seventy-five wide. (Marked A in plan.) **Upon four rows of cedar pillars**—Interpreters have been puzzled to determine the position of these four rows of pillars. Fergusson, following the English version, tries to reconcile the manifest inconsistency of "forty-five pillars, fifteen in a row," (mentioned in next verse,) with the four rows here mentioned, by supposing that three rows of columns stood free, and the fourth was built into the outer wall. But this is altogether unsatisfactory, and rests upon an errone-



PROBABLE GROUND PLAN OF SOLOMON'S PALACE.

A—House of the Forest of Lebanon. B—Porch of Pillars. C—Porch of Judgment. E—Inner Court. D—Royal Residence. F—House of Pharaoh's Daughter. H—Great Court.

it was covered with cedar above upon the <sup>1</sup>beams, that lay on forty five pil-

1 Heb. *ribs*.

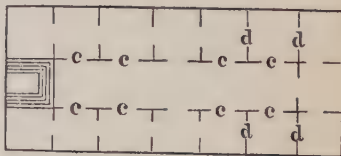
ous interpretation of verse 3. Thenius supposes the pillars to have run round the entire hall on the inside, thus affording, as the Vulgate suggests, promenading places (*deambulacra*) between the rows of pillars; but his plan supposes four hundred pillars, far too great a number to crowd into a building of one hundred cubits by fifty. The great hall of the palace at Shushan, three hundred and forty-three by two hundred and forty-four feet, had, in all, but seventy-two columns, and its great central hall but thirty-six, and all standing nearly twenty feet apart. (Loftus, *Chaldea*, p. 367.) The central hall of the great palace of Xerxes at Persepolis, about two hundred feet square, also had thirty-six columns, standing the same distance apart, and also in six rows. W. L. Alexander, who follows mainly the plans of Thenius, (in Kitto's *Cyclopædia of Bib. Lit.*.) objects to his arrangement of the pillars, and "ventures to suggest that the four courses of pillars were not on the same area, but one above the other, corresponding to the four floors of the building." But this would interfere with the side-chambers mentioned in the next verse. It is better to understand them as all resting upon the first floor, and supporting the chambers above, the four rows running lengthwise through the great hall. If, now, we suppose four rows of nine pillars in each row, placed equidistant, and enclosed by walls on the four sides, we meet all the necessary conditions of the case, and have a great hall of precisely the same number of columns as the central halls of the great palaces of Susa and Persepolis. According to this arrangement, the rows would be ten cubits apart, allowing ten cubits between the outer row and the wall on each side. **Beams upon the pillars**—On which the floor of the first row of upper chambers might rest.

3. **Upon the beams**—Rather, *Upon the chambers*; for *עֲלֵיהֶן*, here rendered *beams*, is the same word that is ren-

lars, fifteen in a row. 4 And there were windows in three rows, and <sup>2</sup>light was

2 Heb. *sight against sight*.

dered *chambers* in vi, 5, 8. The meaning here is, that he covered over or wainscotted with cedar the chambers, which in the stories above rested upon the four rows of pillars previously described. The whole verse should be translated thus: *And above he covered over with cedar the side-chambers which were upon the pillars, forty-five, (in number,) fifteen in a row.* That is, the chambers, not the pillars, were forty-five in number. **Fifteen in a row**—That is, fifteen chambers on each story, running in a row around the sides. *טֹר*, a row, may be used of a layer of stones (chap. vi, 36) or a series of chambers, as here, as well as of a range of pillars. Ver. 2. A single row or tier of these chambers is represented in the annexed cut, one chamber at the end being the place of the stairway.



4. **Windows in three rows**—Rather, *The frameworks were three rows.* The word *שַׁקְפִים* does not mean *windows*, but is applied, in chap. vi, 4, to the cross-bars or framework of windows. So here it means the framework of beams with which the three galleries were constructed. Each of these three rows of framework contained a row of fifteen chambers. **Light was against light**—*מִתְחַזֵּק*, here

translated *light*, means a place to see through, an aperture for the purpose of looking out, like those of the boxes in a theatre. These openings were *against* or opposite to each other, one in each chamber. (c c in cut.) **In three ranks**—Or, *three times*. Corresponding to the three ranges of chambers. Each gallery had its row of openings looking out into the interior

against light in three ranks. **5** And all the <sup>3</sup>doors and posts *were* square, with the windows: and light *was* against light in three ranks. **6** And he made a porch of pillars; the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth thereof thirty cubits: and the porch *was* <sup>4</sup>before them: and the *other* pillars and the

thick beam *were* <sup>5</sup>before them. **7** Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, *even* the porch of judgment: and *it was* covered with cedar <sup>6</sup>from one side of the floor to the other. **8** And his house where he dwelt *had* another court within the porch, *which* was of the like work. Solomon made

<sup>2</sup> Or, spaces and pillars were square in prospect.—<sup>4</sup> Or, according to them.

<sup>5</sup> Or, according to them.—<sup>6</sup> Hebrew, from floor to floor.

of the great hall below, and this interior may have been either open in the centre to the sky, or, as Alexander observes, the whole may have been roofed over, and lighted above by a clearstory. The latter supposition is more probable.

**5. All the doors**—Which led from one of these chambers to another. (d d

in cut.) **And posts**—מְחוֹזֹת, *posts*,

is undoubtedly a copyist's error, and for it we should read, as did the Septuagint translators, מְחוֹזֹת, *apertures*, described in the preceding verse. **Were**

**square, with the windows**—Here, again, the translation is erroneous. וְשָׁקָף

does not mean *windows*, but a *layer of beams*; that is, a beam framework. Render: *And all the doors and the apertures were of squared beamwork*. They were built in square form, and not arched.

**6. A porch of pillars**—The exact position of this porch is not stated, but as the description of the palace began with the house of the forest of Lebanon, we naturally suppose, in the absence of any thing that appears to the contrary, that it follows the order of the successive buildings, and accordingly this porch was situated between the house of the forest of Lebanon and the porch of judgment described in the next verse. (B in plan.) It served as a majestic colonnade leading to the throne-chamber. **The porch was before them**—Rather, *a porch*. A portico of lesser dimensions was built before the pillars. (a in plan.) **Pillars and the thick beam**—The pillars here mentioned were probably a sort of peristyle to the great porch of pillars; that is, a range of noticeable pillars running round the outside of the porch. The עַב, *thick beam*, is to be understood

of the threshold, or rather the ascent by steps into the porch, which was, of course, *before* or *in front of* the pillars, and probably ran around the entire porch.

**7. A porch for the throne**—As the inner court of the house where the king dwelt was within this porch, (verse 8,) the porch itself must have led to it from the outer porch of pillars. So this throne-chamber was between the porch of pillars and the inner court. (R in plan.) It was the place where the king received his officers of state, and also foreign ambassadors and princes on important occasions, and especially where he sat to hear and decide the cases that were submitted to his judgment, and hence called, by way of eminence, **the porch of judgment**. Here was the great throne of ivory, and its magnificent and awe-inspiring surroundings, which are mentioned in chap. x, 18–20. **From one side of the floor to the other**—Rather, as the margin, *from floor to floor*; that is, from floor to ceiling.

**8. His house where he dwelt**—The royal residence proper. (D D in plan.) All the buildings and porches of the palace hitherto described were as so many vestibules or passage ways extending lengthwise through the midst of the great court, (verse 12,) and conducting to the immediate apartments of the king. They formed a grand approach to the throne; and a person passing through them in the order named would become more and more impressed with feelings of reverence and awe as he drew near the royal presence. **Another court within the porch**—Rather, *the other court*, in distinction from the great court round about the entire group of palatial buildings. This inner court was behind the

also a house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife, like unto this porch. **9** All these *were of* costly stones, according to the measures of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even from the foundation unto the coping, and so on the outside toward the great court. **10** And the foundation *was of* costly stones, even

b Chap. 3, 1; 2 Chron. 8, 11.—c Isa. 28, 16; 54, 11; 1 Cor. 3, 10, 11; Rev. 21, 19, 20.

porch of judgment, and enclosed by that porch in front, and the royal residence on the other three sides. (E in plan.) **Was of the like work**—Work like that of the porch of judgment; that is, the king's house, (not the court, as the **which** supplied in the English version seems to indicate,) was wainscotted with cedar from floor to ceiling throughout all its apartments. **A house for Pharaoh's daughter**—This probably formed the back part of the royal residence, (F in plan,) and at a later period became the royal harem, where the king kept the "many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh," who turned his heart away from the Lord. Chap. xi, 1.

**9. All these were of costly stones**—That is, the exterior walls of all these buildings were built of costly stones. **According to the measures of hewed stones**—Rather, *according to the measure of hewing*; that is, according to the amount of skill and labour required in sawing and hewing them. They were costly on account of this vast amount of labour and expense in preparing them for use. **Sawed with saws**—Here is evidence of the ancient use of saws in cutting stone. "Saws appear in Assyrian sculptures of the age of Sennacherib; and fragments of an iron saw were found at Nimrud."—*Rawlinson*. **Within and without**—That is, on both sides of the wall the sawn surface of the stones appeared. But the inside of most of the buildings was covered with cedar, and so only the outside, towards the great court, continued to reveal from foundation to coping the smoothly sawn faces of the costly stones.

**10. Even great stones**—These foundation stones were costly because of

great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits. **11** And above *were* costly stones, after the measures of hewed stones, and cedars. **12** And the great court round about *was* with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of the Lord, "and for the porch of the house.

d John 10, 23; Acts 3, 11; 5, 12.

their great size rather than of the vast amount of labour required in hewing them. **Ten cubits**—About fifteen feet. See note on chap. v, 17.

**11. And above**—In the upper parts of the buildings.

**12. The great court round about**—The great enclosure or park in which all the palatial buildings stood. (H H H in plan.) **Three rows of hewed stones**—Or three layers of hewn stone. See note on chap. vi, 36. If this view of this obscure verse be correct, it follows that the great court of the palace was not a cultivated park, but a solid artificial platform of stone-work, covered by a cedar flooring. This is the more probable since all the palace buildings were set upon a vast artificial platform raised upon the southern slope of Mount Moriah. **Both for the inner court of the house of the Lord**—The meaning is, that the pavement of the great court of the palace, like that of the inner court of the temple, (see chap. vi, 36,) consisted of three layers of hewn stone placed one upon another, with a layer of cedar planks fastened on the top of them. **And for the porch of the house**—That is, the porch of the palace had a similar pavement.

Here ends the Bible account of Solomon's palace. But it is manifestly not an exhaustive or minute description; and it is likely that there were various apartments, and perhaps whole buildings, of less importance that receive no mention here. Josephus adds that he built other edifices for pleasure, and long cloisters, and a magnificent dining room, and various other things which it seems not to have been the purpose of the sacred historian to mention or describe.

**13** And king Solomon sent and fetched <sup>a</sup>Hiram out of Tyre. **14** <sup>a</sup>He was <sup>a</sup>a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and <sup>a</sup>his father was a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and <sup>b</sup>he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and

<sup>e</sup>2 Chron. 4. 11, *Hiram*. Ver. 40.—<sup>f</sup>2 Chron. 4. 14.—<sup>g</sup>7 Heb. *the son of a widow woman*.—<sup>g</sup>2 Chron. 2. 16.

#### THE METAL WORK AND VESSELS OF THE TEMPLE, 13–51.

**13. Hiram**—Called also (verse 40, margin) *Hiram* and *Hiram*. 2 Chron. iv, 11. So his name was subjected to the same variations of orthography as that of the Tyrian king.

**14. A widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali**—According to 2 Chron. ii, 14, she was of the daughters of Dan. But this need not be regarded as an error or mistake in either text, for she may have been by birth of the tribe of Dan, and by marriage connected with the tribe of Naphtali. So she would be a widow of Naphtali when Hiram's father married her. Other explanations are also possible. **A man of Tyre**—Probably a native Tyrian, and not, as some have supposed, an Israelite who had become a resident of Tyre. **A worker in brass**—This is in apposition with *man of Tyre*, that is, Hiram's father. Hiram followed his father's trade. **He was filled with wisdom**—His skill and proficiency in working brass are described in nearly the same words as were used of Bezaleel, the divinely gifted artificer of the tabernacle. Exod. xxxi, 3; xxxvi, 1. **Cunning to work all works in brass**—In 2 Chronicles (ii, 14) it is said that he was "skilful to work in gold, and in silver, in brass, in iron, in stone, and in timber; in purple, in blue, and in fine linen, and in crimson; also to grave any manner of graving, and to find out every device which shall be put to him."

**Wrought all his work**—"Of course Hiram was only a foreman or leader of these different branches of art; and he certainly did not come alone, but brought several assistants with him, who carried out the different works under his superintendence."—*Keil*.

wrought all his work. **15** For he <sup>a</sup>cast <sup>a</sup>two pillars of brass, of eighteen cubits high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about.

**16** And he made <sup>k</sup>two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapter was five cubits, and the height of the

<sup>h</sup>Exod. 31. 3; 36. 1.—<sup>8</sup>Heb. *fashioned*.—<sup>i</sup>2 Kings 25. 17; 2 Chron. 3. 15; 4. 12; Jer. 52. 21.—<sup>k</sup>Exod. 36. 38; 38. 17; 2 Chron. 4. 13.

**15. He cast**—Hebrew, *Formed or fashioned*. **Two pillars of brass**—

"There are no features connected with the temple of Solomon which have given rise to so much controversy, or been so difficult to explain, as the form of the two pillars of brass which were set up in the porch. It has even been supposed that they were not pillars, in the ordinary sense of the term, but obelisks; for this, however, there does not appear to be any authority."—*Ferguson*. It is doubtless impossible to restore with exact correctness the forms of the pillars, but from the minute description here given, though in some parts obscure, it is not difficult to form an approximate restoration of their principal features. **Eighteen cubits high apiece**—This is to be understood of the height of the main shaft, not including the capitals and lily work. The thirty-five cubits, mentioned in 2 Chron. iii, 15 as the height of these pillars, is without doubt an error. **Twelve cubits did compass either**

—Literally, the dimensions are thus given: *Eighteen cubits was the height of the one pillar, and a line of twelve cubits encircled the second pillar*.

Thus we have given us the height of one pillar, and the circumference of the other; but this is only an abbreviated form of stating the measurements. These columns were hollow, and the brass was four fingers in thickness. Jer. lii, 21.

**16. Two chapiters**—Or capitals. **Molten brass**—Brass melted, so as to be cast into the forms desired. The brass, of which these pillars, the brazen sea, and



other chapter *was* five cubits: **17** And nets of checker work, and wreaths of chain work, for the chapiters which *were* upon the top of the pillars; seven for the one chapter, and seven for the other chapter. **18** And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters

that *were* upon the top, with pomegranates: and so did he for the other chapter. **19** And the chapters that *were* upon the top of the pillars *were* of lily work in the porch, four cubits. **20** And the chapters upon the two pillars *had* pomegranates also above, over against the belly which *was* by the network:

other vessels were made, had been captured by David from the cities of Hadarezer. 1 Chron. xviii, 8.

**17. Nets of checker work**—The words would apply equally well to representations either of netting, lattice, or basket work. **Wreaths of chain work**—Whether this is to be taken as in apposition with nets of checker work, or as something distinct from it, is not clear. The passage is, literally: *nets, work of a net, twists, work of chains, for the capitals*. 2 Chron. iii, 16 is also obscure, and lends no aid. The more probable meaning is, that the network consisted of chain-like twists, so that "wreaths of chain work" is explanatory of "nets of checker work." **Seven for the one**—That is, the network on each capital was composed of seven strands or chains. But by comparing verse 41, where "the two networks" are mentioned, there is reason to suspect the reading *seven*, (שבעה) and to adopt the reading of the Septuagint, which is *díkrua, network*, (שבכה). Then the passage would read, *a network for the one capital, and a network for the other capital*. The words שבכה and שבעה are so nearly alike that one may easily have become substituted for the other.

**18. He made the pillars**—Rather, he made *pomegranates*, for in the Masoretic text the words *pillars* and *pomegranates* have evidently become transposed. So below, where our version has *upon the top, with pomegranates*, we should read, *upon the top of the pillars*. "The pomegranate was one of the commonest ornaments in Assyria. It was used on quivers, on spear-shafts and mace-heads, in patterns on doorways and pavements. It is doubtful whether a symbolical meaning attached to it, or whether it was merely selected as a beautiful natural form."—*Rawlinson*. **Two rows**—These rows of pome-

granates were probably set upon the upper and lower edges of *the network*, so that there were two rows for each pillar, and one hundred pomegranates in each row. See on verse 20. **To cover the chapters**—More fully in verse 42, "to cover the two bowls of the chapters;" that is, as we take it, to cover the upper and lower edges of the bowls or pommels of each capital.

**19. The chapters . . . were of lily work**—That is, the upper part of each capital was wrought so as to resemble a full-blown lily-cup. The exact species of *lily* here intended cannot be determined. Some think the lotus flower is meant. **In the porch, four cubits**—The exact reference of these words it is difficult to explain. They seem to have been transposed from their proper place in the text. Keil thinks the reading should be *as in the porch*. But we have no notice elsewhere of lily work in the porch. Others have suggested that the lilies projected four cubits into the porch. Wordsworth suggests that the lily work was on the *inner side* of the pillars towards the porch, and not on the outer side. Thenius takes the words to designate the position of the pillars themselves, as standing in the porch, and this, on the whole, seems to be the best explanation, though it seems to involve a confusion or transposition of words in the text. Since the circumference of the pillars was twelve cubits, (verse 15,) the diameter was a little less than four cubits, so that each pillar would take up the space of four cubits within and on either side of the porch.

**20. Had pomegranates**—There is nothing corresponding to these words in the Hebrew, and their insertion by our translators was an error. This verse is a repetitious explanation of the preceding, and defines more particularly the position of the lily work part of the

and the pomegranates *were* <sup>1</sup>two hundred in rows round about upon the other chapter. **21** <sup>m</sup>And he set up the pillars in <sup>n</sup>the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof <sup>o</sup>Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof <sup>10</sup>Boaz. **22** And upon the top of the pillars *was* lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished. **23** And he made <sup>a</sup>a molten sea, ten cubits <sup>11</sup>from the one brim to the other: *it was* round all about, and his height *was* five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. **24** And under the brim

of it round about *there were* knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, <sup>p</sup>compassing the sea round about: the knops *were* cast in two rows, when it was cast. **25** It stood upon <sup>q</sup>twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts *were* inward. **26** And it *was* a handbreadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies: it contained <sup>r</sup>two thousand baths. **27** And he made

<sup>12</sup>Chron. 3. 16; 4. 13; Jer. 52. 23. — <sup>m</sup>2 Chron. 3. 17. — <sup>n</sup>Chap. 3. 3. — <sup>9</sup>That is, *He shall establish.* — <sup>10</sup>In *it is strength.* — <sup>o</sup>2 Kings

25. 13; 2 Chron. 4. 2; Jer. 52. 17. — <sup>11</sup>Heb. *fi im his brim to his brim.* — <sup>p</sup>2 Chron. 4. 3. — <sup>q</sup>2 Chron. 4. 4, 5; Jer. 52. 20. — <sup>r</sup>2 Chron. 4. 5.

capitals. It should be rendered: *And the capitals upon the two pillars were also above in immediate connexion with the belly, which was beyond the network.*

**The belly which was by the network**—That is, the oval shaped form of the capital at the place upon which the network was wrought, (literally, *beyond*, that is, behind the network,) called *bowls* in verse 41, and *pommels* in 2 Chron. iv. 13. **Two hundred in rows**—Two hundred in both rows of each pillar, making four hundred for the two networks of both pillars, (verse 42; 2 Chron. iv. 13,) and one hundred for each row or chain. 2 Chron. iii. 16; Jer. lii. 23.

**21. The right pillar**—The one standing at the right hand of a person who stood in the porch looking out; that is, on the south side of the entrance. **Jachin**—יָכִין, *he will establish*;

*lish*; or, *an establisher*. **Boaz**—בֹּאֵז, *firmness; strength; stability*. These pillars were symbolical, and their names indicate that the temple was built both for the *establishment* and *stability* of the true worship of Jehovah.

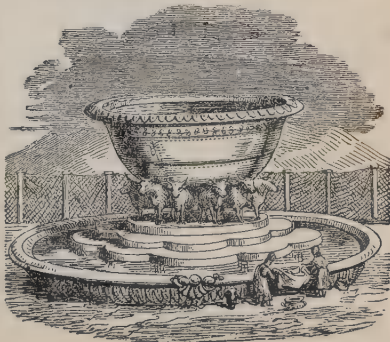
**23. A molten sea**—Called also *brazen sea*, from the material of which it was made. It was a vast bowl-shaped font, or laver, like that which Moses made for the tabernacle, (Exod. xxx. 18,) and for the same purpose, but on account of its immense size it is called *a sea*. Its general appearance is shown

in the annexed cut, which will serve to explain the sacred writer's description better than would any verbal comment on his words.

**24. Knops . . . in two rows**—Egg-shaped representations of the wild gourd or cucumber, as in chap. vi. 18, compassing the laver in a double row at the upper part.

**25. It stood upon twelve oxen**—Josephus adds that its middle part rested on a short pillar ten cubits in diameter.

**26. Like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies**—Literally, *its lip was as the work of the lip of a cup—a flower of a lily*. The brim curved outward, and was engraved with lily flowers. **Two thousand baths**—About seventeen thousand gallons. The reading *three thousand*, in 2 Chron. iv. 5, is prob-



BRAZEN SEA.

ten "bases of brass; four cubits *was* the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and three cubits the height of it. 28 And the work of the bases *was* on this manner: they had borders, and the borders *were* between

the ledges: 29 And on the borders that *were* between the ledges *were* lions, oxen, and cherubin: and upon the ledges *there was* a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen *were* certain additions made of thin work. 30 And

2 Kings 25. 13, 16; 2 Chron.

4. 14; Jer. 52. 17, 20.

ably an error. By estimating the capacity of this sea from its dimensions, as given in verse 23, it seems hardly possible that it could have held so much. But all calculations based on the dimensions given in verse 23 must be uncertain because of our ignorance of the exact shape of the laver. Perhaps the two thousand baths may denote the capacity, not only of the laver or sea proper, but also of the basin beneath it, as seen in the cut. This sea held the water which the priests used for their ablutions. 2 Chron. iv, 6.

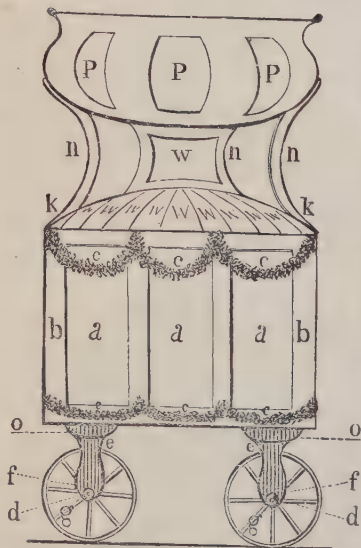
27. **Ten bases**—Square chest-shaped supports on which the brazen lavers mentioned in verse 38 rested. The exact form of these bases and the la-

vers is, like that of the pillars Jachin and Boaz, difficult to define. The Scripture text itself is very obscure—the terms used are rare, and the versions all differ widely, and afford us no real aid. We may, however, by a careful study of the Hebrew text and the aid of the annexed cut, approximate a tolerably correct idea of the construction of these vessels. While the water in the brazen sea served for the priests to wash in, the lavers held the water in which they washed "such things as they offered for the burnt offering." 2 Chron. iv, 6. Hence they were set upon lofty bases to lift them near to the top of the great brazen altar of burnt offerings, which was ten cubits high. 2 Chron. iv, 1. The bases were three cubits high, (verse 27,) the wheels a cubit and a half, (32,) the round compass half a cubit, (35,) the laver one cubit, and its base work a cubit and a half, (31,) and the corners or feet (30) were probably half a cubit, so that the height of the entire structure would be eight cubits, or about twelve feet. This would bring the top of the laver within three feet of the top of the great altar, and thus place it within convenient reach of the officiating priest.

28. **They had borders**—מִסְבֵּּּּּ, inclosed panels. (a a a in figure.) **Be-**

**tween the ledges**—שִׁלְבִּים, joints; fastening places. The corner pieces which joined upon and fastened the panels. (b b in figure.)

29. **Lions, oxen, and cherubim**—Miniature representations of them, for the size of the panels would not permit other. **Upon the ledges**... **a base above**—That is, an additional smaller base on the top of the other for the laver to stand upon. Its convex roof is called, in verse 35, *a round compass*. (k k in figure.) **Certain additions**—



BASES AND LAVER.

a, Panels. b, Ledges. c, Garlands. d, Axles. e, Undersettors, or Stays. f, Hubs. g, Spokes. k, Round Compass. n, Basework of Laver, or Plates. o, Feet. P, Panels on Laver. w, Panels on Plates, and Round Compass.

every base had four brazen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver were undersetters molten, at the side of every addition. **31** And the mouth of it within the chapter and above was a cubit: but the mouth thereof was round after the work of the base, a cubit and a half: and also upon the mouth of it were gravings with their borders,

12 Heb. *in the base.*

**לִיזֶה**, garlands, festoons. Such garlands adorned the upper as well as the lower portions of each base. Comp. verse 36. (c c in figure.) **Made of thin work—**

**מְעִשֶׂה מוֹדָר** means, according to Fürst, *deepened work*, and refers to all the ornaments mentioned in this verse as having been set into the metal in which they were engraved. According to the Vulgate and Gesenius, it means *hanging work*.

**30. Wheels—**These served for convenience in moving the lavers and bases to and fro. **Plates of brass—**Rather, *axles*. (d in figure.) **The four corners—**Rather, *the four feet*, meaning, doubtless, the projecting bottoms of the bases at the places where feet or legs would naturally be. (o o in figure.) **Undersetters—**Or, *side-pieces*, reaching down to the axles of the wheels and serving as stays or supports. (e e in figure.) **At the side of every addition—**Better, *beyond each were garlands*. The meaning seems to be that the undersetters, or side-pieces, were cast so as to be underneath the laver and the engraved garlands mentioned in verse 29.

**31. The mouth of it—**The mouth of the laver; its opening at the top; involving in this case, also, the entire cavity or hollow of the laver. **Within the chapter and above—**An obscure and unintelligible expression, meaning, perhaps, the depth of the laver. **A cubit—**Literally, *in a cubit*; perhaps an erroneous copying of **כַּאֲמֹרָה** *about a cubit*. We take the meaning to be, that the depth of the laver was about one cubit. **The mouth thereof was round after the work of the base, a cubit and a half—**This makes no sense at

foursquare, not round. **32** And under the borders were four wheels; and the axletrees of the wheels were <sup>12</sup>joined to the base: and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit. **33** And 'the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, were all molten. **34** And there were four undersetters to the four corners

t Ezek. 1, 16, 18.

all, and if we follow the common punctuation, the passage is perfectly unintelligible. It is very likely that some words have here fallen out of the text. As it is, it seems best to punctuate and read as follows: *And the mouth was round; the base-work was a cubit and a half; and also upon the mouth were engravings, and their panels were square, not rounded.* On this rendering we make the following notes: *Mouth...* was round—That is, the opening was round at the top, like a bowl. *Base-work was a cubit and a half*—The base-work that connected immediately with the laver, and separated it a cubit and a half from the round compass (verse 35) of the base above. Verse 29. This base work probably consisted of a pedestal and open standards in the form of curved plates, as represented in the figure. (n n.) See on verse 35. *Upon the mouth were engravings*—That is, upon the concave surface of the inside of the laver, and probably also on the outside. *Their panels*—The panels of the engravings. (P P in figure.) The lavers were so cast as to present the appearance of square panels set in the surface, and these panels were covered with sculptured work.

**32. Axletrees of the wheels—**Rather, *hands*, or *supports* of the wheels, (e e in figure,) which fastened their axles to the base; the same as the *undersetters*. Verse 30. This same word occurs again in the next verse (33) and should be rendered, there as here, *supports* or *stays*.

**33. Axletrees...naves...felloes...spokes—**The proper order and rendering of the words in the Hebrew text is as follows: *Stays, felloes, spokes, naves*. The nave is the same as the hub. (f f in figure.)

of one base: *and* the undersetters *were* of the very base itself. **35** And in the top of the base *was there* a round compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base the ledges thereof and the borders thereof *were* of the same. **36** For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof, he graved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, according to the <sup>13</sup>proportion of every one, and additions round about. **37** After *this manner* he made the ten bases: all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size. **38** Then <sup>14</sup>made he ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty baths: and every laver was four cubits: and upon every one of the ten bases one laver. **39** And he put five bases on the right <sup>14</sup>side of the house, and five on the left side of the house:

<sup>13</sup> Hebrew, *nakedness*.—<sup>u</sup> 2 Chronicles 4. 6; Zechariah 13. 1; Hebrews 9. 10; 10. 22.—<sup>14</sup> Hebrew, *shoulder*.

**34. Of the very base itself**—Cast so as to be one solid piece with the base, and not joined to it by pins or nails.

**35. Round compass of half a cubit high**—This was the convex roof of the smaller base above, (k k in figure,) which rested on the top of the ledges, (verse 29,) and supported in turn the more immediate base-work of the laver. See note on verse 21. **The ledges thereof and the borders thereof were of the same**—Literally, *on the top of the base its hands and its panels of it*. What these *hands*, or supports, on the top of the base, were, it is hard to determine. But as the word in verses 32 and 33 was used of the stays that fastened the axles to the base, and are called the *hands* of the *wheels* rather than the *legs* of the base, so here, we incline to take the *hands* of the base for the legs or supports of the laver, called also in verse 31 the *base-work* of the laver. (n n n in figure.) It is there called *base-work* rather than *a base*, because it was made of several pieces of metal set underneath the laver with open spaces between, and not of a solid cube, like the lower bases. The round compass had also panels, like the lower base and the surface of the laver, (w w in figure,) and these, like them, were covered with sculptured work. **Of the same**—Or, *of it*; that is, cast, like the undersetters,

and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, over against the south. **40** And <sup>15</sup>Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basins. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made king Solomon for the house of the Lord: **41** The two pillars, and the *two* bowls of the chapiters that *were* on the top of the two pillars; and the two <sup>16</sup>networks, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters which *were* upon the top of the pillars: **42** And four hundred pomegranates for the two networks, *even* two rows of pomegranates for one network, to cover the two bowls of the chapiters that *were* <sup>16</sup>upon the pillars: **43** And the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases; **44** And one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea; **45** <sup>17</sup>And the pots, and the shovels,

<sup>15</sup> Heb. *Hiram*. See verse 13.—<sup>v</sup> Verses 17, 18.—<sup>16</sup> Heb. *upon the face of the pillars*.—<sup>w</sup> Exod. 27. 3; 2 Chron. 4. 16.

(verse 34,) so as to be one piece with the base itself.

**36. Plates of the ledges**—Rather, *plates of the hands*; the outer surface of the plates which formed a part of the basework or supports of the laver. (n n in figure.) **According to the proportion of every one**—Better, *according to the open space of each*. That is, according to the room or space which each afforded for such engravings. **Additions round about**—Garlands. (c c in figure.) See on verse 29.

**37. One casting**—They were all ten cast in one mould, so as necessarily to be of **one measure, and one size** or shape.

**38. Ten lavers**—One laver to stand on each of the ten bases. **Forty baths**—Three hundred and fifty-five gallons. **Every laver was four cubits**—In diameter at the mouth.

**39. The right side of the house**—Hebrew, *the right shoulder of the house*; that is, the south side, near the front part of the building, or at the south side of the porch. **Left side**—The corresponding north side of the building. **The sea . . . eastward, over against the south**—That is, southeast from the front of the temple.

**41. Bowls of the chapiters**—See note on verse 20.

**45. Pots**—Or, *pans*, for receiving and carrying the ashes away. Com-

and the basins: and all these vessels, which Hiram made to king Solomon for the house of the Lord, were of <sup>17</sup> bright brass. **46** <sup>18</sup>In the plain of Jordan did the king cast them, <sup>19</sup>in the clay ground between <sup>20</sup>Succoth and <sup>21</sup>Zarthan. **47** And Solomon left all the vessels *unweighed*, <sup>22</sup>because they were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass <sup>23</sup>found out. **48** And Solomon made all the vessels that pertained unto the

<sup>17</sup> Hebrew, *made bright*, or, *scoured*.—<sup>18</sup> 2 Chron. 4, 17.—<sup>19</sup> Hebrew, *in the thickness of the ground*.—<sup>20</sup> Genesis 33, 17.—<sup>21</sup> Josh. 3, 16.

pure Exod. xxvii, 3. **Shovels**—For removing ashes from the altar. **Basins**—To receive the blood of the sacrifices to be sprinkled on the altar.

**46. In the clay ground**—In the dense, compact soil which is found in the vicinity of the Jordan. This dense soil was peculiarly adapted to foundry work. **Succoth and Zarthan**—Places in the Jordan valley not yet identified with any modern town or ruin. See on Gen. xxxiii, 17 and Josh. iii, 16.

**48. The altar of gold**—Overlaid with gold. See on chap. vi, 20. This altar in the temple was doubtless of the same form as that of the tabernacle. See on Exod. xxx, 1-5 and xxxvii, 25-28. The great brazen altar of burnt offerings in the court is not mentioned in this chapter, and only referred to incidentally in chap. viii, 64. **Table of gold**—Like that of the tabernacle. See

house of the Lord: <sup>a</sup>the altar of gold, and <sup>b</sup>the table of gold, whereupon <sup>c</sup>the showbread was, **49** And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps, and the tongs of gold. **50** And the bowls, and the snuffers, and the basins, and the spoons, and the censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, both for the doors of the inner house,

<sup>19</sup> Heb. *for the exceeding multitude*.—<sup>20</sup> Heb. *sounded*, 1 Chron. 22, 14.—<sup>a</sup> Exod. 37, 25, &c.—<sup>b</sup> Exod. 37, 10, &c.—<sup>c</sup> Exod. 25, 30; Lev. 24, 5-8.—<sup>21</sup> Heb. *ashpans*.

Rome, were the table and candlestick of the Herodian temple. These are shown in the annexed cuts, and were probably, in the main, like those of the more ancient temple of Solomon.

**49. Candlesticks**—These ten golden candlesticks were all doubtless made after the pattern of that which adorned



the tabernacle, and whose form is described in Exod. xxv, 31-36. **Flowers**—Which served to ornament the candlesticks. **Lamps**—What we term candles were not used, but lamps, with oil, were set, one on the central

shaft, and one on each of the six branches of the golden candlestick. They were the receptacles for the wick and oil, and might be easily taken down, cleaned, and filled, without disturbing the candlestick itself. See on Exod. xxv, 37. **Tongs**—To handle burning coals, (Isa. vi, 6,) and sometimes to use as snuffers. Exod. xxxvii, 23.

**50. Bowls**—Used for drinking out of, and sometimes, like the basins, for sprinkling. Compare Exod. xii, 22.

**Spoons**—כַּפֹּת, *pans*, or *dishes*; for

what particular purpose does not appear. **Censers**—Fire-pans, in which coals were taken up and incense kindled. These smaller vessels are not described, but are supposed to have been like those of the tabernacle.



on Exod. xxv, 23-30. In 2 Chron. iv, 8 mention is made of ten tables, and they were all probably of this same form, and placed five on each side of the holy place. Among the spoils taken from Jerusalem by Titus, as appears sculptured in relief on his triumphal arch at

the most holy *place, and* for the doors of the house, *to wit*, of the temple. **51** So was ended all the work that king Solomon made for the house of the Lord. And Solomon brought in

the <sup>22</sup>things <sup>d</sup>which David his father had dedicated; *oven* the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord.

22 Heb. *holy things of David*.

d 2 Sam. 8. 11; 2 Chron. 5. 1.

#### ON THE SYMBOLISM OF THE TEMPLE.

The temple of Solomon, so far as it was a reproduction, on an enlarged scale, of the tabernacle, was, like that more ancient structure, the pattern, example, and shadow of heavenly things. Heb. viii, 5. But Solomon introduced a number of additions to the ancient pattern shown to Moses in the mount. The side-chambers, the colossal cherubim, the molten sea on twelve oxen in place of the more simple laver of the tabernacle-court, the ten smaller lavers and their bases, the ten tables and the ten golden candlesticks, all seem to have been the product and expression of theocratic ideas that had been maturing in the Israelitish mind for more than four hundred years, though many of them were probably demanded by the more extensive and elaborate service of Solomon's time. An attempt to point out the sacred symbolism and meaning of the various parts and vessels of the temple must, in many respects, at best end only in conjectures. But this subject should not, therefore, be passed without remark. Dr. Bähr well observes, that if the entire system of Hebrew worship "were no idle ceremony, still less could the structure where this worship became concentrated be an empty, meaningless piece of architectural splendour. All the ancients so founded, arranged, and adorned their temples that they were the expression and the representation of their specific religious contemplation. The temple of Solomon would have been an exception to all the sacred buildings of high antiquity, had it not been the expression of the specifically Israelitish Old Testament ideas of religion."

The writer just quoted has made this subject a special study, and has written extensively upon it, both in his Commentary on Kings, and his able

work on the "Symbolism of the Mosaic Worship." The present note is based largely on his exposition. Remarks on the typical significance of the altars, laver, table of showbread, golden candlestick, and mercyseat belong rather to the explanation of the tabernacle. We notice here only the leading outlines of the temple-plan, and the significance of its principal parts.

Though Solomon was well aware that "the heaven and heaven of heavens" could not contain the God of Israel, (chap. viii, 27.) yet he built the temple with the declared purpose of providing a house for Jehovah to dwell in—a settled place for his abode. Chap. viii, 13. He could therefore have entertained no such thought as that by dwelling in the temple God ceased to be omnipresent; but the temple was specifically the place where Jehovah recorded his name, and therefore the visible sign and pledge of his covenant with Israel. It was the abode of his holiness, the place where he was to be consulted and understood by his people. Hence the graduated sanctity of the court, the holy place, and the holy of holies, was adapted to teach an impressive lesson of the absolute holiness of Jehovah.

While the temple was thus specifically the dwellingplace of Jehovah, it also typified heaven itself, which is "the true tabernacle." Heb. viii, 2; ix, 24. Accordingly, in Solomon's prayer at the dedication we find a continued contrast between "this house" or "this place," and "heaven, thy dwellingplace," or simply "heaven." Chap. viii. 30-49. And so the pious Israelite might ever see in the holy and beautiful house where Jehovah recorded his name a type and symbol of heaven itself. It was the temple of his holiness. Ps. v, 7; lxxix, 1; cxxxviii, 2.

Bähr totally rejects the opinion that the temple was a representation of the

theocracy of the kingdom of God in Israel, or of the New Testament "kingdom of heaven," and urges that the latter is a divine-human *relation*, while the dwelling of Jehovah is a *place*. But he seems to overlook in this connexion the great truth that the divine-human relationship realized in the kingdom of grace is truly God dwelling in man, (1 John iv, 12, 16.) or making his abode with him, (John xiv, 23;) and that the great body of his people in whom he thus dwells are called "the temple of the living God," "a habitation of God through the Spirit." 1 Cor. iii, 17; 2 Cor. vi, 16; Eph. ii, 21, 22. We may, therefore, look upon the temple that rose to completion so silently that neither hammer nor axe was heard while it was building, as a glorious type of that "spiritual house," built of "lively stones," (1 Peter ii, 5,) "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord." Eph. ii, 21.

Nor should we overlook the profound symbolism of the divine-human relationship set forth in the two main apartments of the temple. Why, in the temple as in the tabernacle, have two holy rooms, rather than three or more? Why, except, as Fairbairn admirably shows, (*Typology*, vol. ii, p. 250,) to express the twofold relation that essentially exists between the worshipper and God? The holy of holies, with its profound symbols of "mercy covering wrath," showed God's relation to his people; how and on what terms the Almighty and Holy One would dwell with man. The holy place, where the consecrated priests ministered, with its incense-altar and tables and candlesticks, expressed the relation of the true worshipper to God. The devout worshippers, who offer before God the incense of continual prayer, are at once the salt of the earth and the light of the world. And this is the one great truth embodied in the several symbols of the holy place. Thus in the two main apartments were exhibited "the two great branches into which the tree of Divine knowledge always, of necessity, runs, namely, the

things to be believed concerning God, and the things to be done by his believing people."

When we come to observe the details of the structure we notice, first of all, the graduated sanctity of the three holy places. First, the court, where nothing unclean might enter; then the holy place, where only the consecrated priests might go to perform holy services; and, beyond this, veiled in thick darkness, the holy of holies, where only the high priest entered, and he but once a year, on the great day of atonement. Here was symbolized not only the absolute holiness of Him who "dwelt in the thick darkness," but also the gradual and progressive revelations of his name and nature, which have been made known to men. Whilst the temple and the priesthood remained, the Holy Ghost signified that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, (Heb. ix, 8;) but since Christ has rent the veil, and entered heaven itself for us, we all may, with boldness and full assurance of faith, enter into the holiest, and have everlasting communion and fellowship with God. Heb. ix, 24; x, 19-22.

The square form of all the apartments and courts of the temple is not without meaning. The oracle was a perfect square, the nave a double square; the porch half a square, etc. Nowhere do we find the form of the triangle, the pentagon, or the circle, but every thing about the sanctuary seems, like the heavenly Jerusalem, to be quadrangular, as if to correspond with the four corners of heaven, the upper dwelling-place of God. Jer. xlix, 36; Matt. xxiv, 31. Equally noticeable is the predominance of the numbers ten and three. The length and breadth of all the apartments and the courts is a common multiple of ten—the number of the commandments written on the tables of testimony within the ark. Ten is the number of the candlesticks and tables, the bases and lavers; ten cubits was the height of the cherubim, and the extent of their outspread wings; ten cubits was the breadth of the molten sea. Then we note the three holy apartments, each with its

## CHAPTER VIII.

**T**HEN <sup>a</sup>Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the heads of the tribes, the <sup>1</sup>chief of the fathers of the

*a* 2 Chron. 5. 2, &c.—<sup>1</sup> Heb. *princes*.

type of expiation—the altar of burnt offerings, the altar of incense, and the mercyseat; the last within the most holy place, which bore the form of a perfect cube, the length and the breadth and the height of it being equal. Each apartment also had three principal kinds of articles of furniture. In the oracle were the cherubim, the ark, and the tables of the law; in the nave were the candlesticks, the tables, and the altar of incense; and in the court were the brazen sea, the lavers, and the altar of burnt offerings. There were, also, the three stories of side-chambers. In this symbolism of numbers we may discern a mystic representation both of the variety and unity of all Divine revelation. “What happens thrice, is the genuine once; what is divided into three, is a true unity. The one dwelling by its division into three parts, is designated as one complete whole; and the three kinds of articles of use which are in the three parts, or in one of them, again form a complete whole, and belong under it to the one or the other relation. While the number ten gives the impress of finishing and completing to multiplicity, the number three is the signature of perfect unity, and thus also of the Divine being.”

The adornings of the temple, the cherubim, lions, oxen, palms, flowers, and lily work, were representative of all created life, and signified that while Jehovah condescended to make the temple his special dwellingplace, his presence fills the universe with life. He upholds all things by the word of his power. Angels and men, cattle and creeping things and fowl, and all inanimate creation, have their being from Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. And thus was added to the various lessons of Jehovah’s absolute holiness and infinite perfections, which the temple symbolized, this ornamental expression of his universal Providence.

children of Israel, unto king Solomon in Jerusalem, <sup>b</sup>that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord <sup>c</sup>out of the city of David, which *is* Zion.

*b* 2 Sam. 6. 17.—*c* 2 Sam. 5. 7, 9: 6. 12, 16.

## CHAPTER VIII.

DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE, 1–66.

As Moses had solemnly consecrated the tabernacle in the wilderness, (Exod. xl, Num. vii,) so now must Solomon, with fitting ceremonies, consecrate that grander house which is to supersede and supplant the tabernacle. And as Moses, the inspired servant of Jehovah, faithful in all his house, (Num. xii, 7,) was the chosen one to consecrate the tabernacle, so Solomon, the divinely-chosen king in Zion, (1 Chron. xxviii, 6,) in whose person the Hebrew monarchy at this time reached the highest summit of its glory, was the only proper person to consecrate the temple. No priest could perform this holy service as properly as he. No other person in the realm had concentrated in himself such sanctity, exaltation, and power. He was the type of that Greater Solomon who is now silently building his spiritual temple, and will himself presently, at the time appointed, fill and hallow it with a cloud of glory that shall never pass away.

**1. Elders . . . heads of the tribes . . . chief of the fathers**—Titles comprehending all the leading men of the nation. Elders included more particularly the chosen representatives of the nation; the heads of the tribes were the leading and most influential individuals; and the chiefs or *princes* of the fathers were the most distinguished and saintly old men of the nation, whose presence and approbation were indispensable at so important an event as the dedication of the temple. **That they might bring up**—This implies that the elders and fathers were to remove the ark, whereas they were assembled rather to witness and sanction the removal. The Hebrew is simply *to bring up*, and should have been so rendered here. The ark was carried by the priests. Verse 3. **Out of the city of David**—Where it had abode

**2** And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the *feast* in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. **3** And all the el-

*d* Leviticus 23, 34; 2 Chronicles 7, 8. — *e* Numbers 4, 15; Deuteronomy 31, 9; Joshua 3, 3, 6;

since the time David had it placed in the tabernacle which he pitched for it on Zion. 2 Sam. vi, 17. This passage clearly shows that Zion and the temple mount were not the same. Compare note on chap. iii, 1.

**2. The feast in the month Ethanim**—Which was the feast of tabernacles. See at Levit. xxiii, 34-43. Ethanim, which Gesenius defines as "the month of flowing streams," corresponded with our October. Solomon finished the temple in the eighth month, (chap. vi, 38,) but waited till the seventh month of the next year for the dedication, that it might be coincident with the feast of tabernacles. It is probable, also, that while the temple itself was finished in the eighth month of Solomon's eleventh year, (chap. vi, 38,) the various vessels described in chap. vii, 23-50 were not completed till some time afterward, and the temple could not be dedicated till all these were finished. It is absurd, however, to suppose, as some do, that Solomon deferred the dedication of the temple for thirteen years after he had completed it. This feast was designed for a thanksgiving and rejoicing over the fruits of harvest, (Exod. xxiii, 16; Deut. xvi, 13,) and also for a commemoration of the time when Israel dwelt in booths, in the desert. Lev. xxiii, 43. It was therefore fitting to associate the dedication of the temple with this important feast, for the ark that had dwelt in a tabernacle, and been carried to and fro for five hundred years, was now to enter into its place of rest. Compare 1 Chron. xxviii, 2; 2 Chron. vi, 41. And so the holy house, begun in the month of flowers and finished in the month of garnered fruits, (see note on chap. vi, 38,) was appropriately consecrated in the month of thanksgiving.

**3. The priests took up the ark**—According to the requirements of the law, (Num. iv, 15; Deut. xxxi, 9,) and not as David carelessly attempted to do.

ders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. **4** And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy

1 Chronicles 15, 14, 15. — *f* Chap. 3, 4; 2 Chronicles 1, 3.



THE ARK, UNCOVERED, BORNE BY PRIESTS.

Compare 2 Sam. vi, 3; 1 Chron. xv, 13. The parallel passage in Chronicles says that "the Levites took up the ark," but that is no contradiction of this verse, for all priests were Levites, though all Levites were not priests. Priests bore the ark across the Jordan and around Jericho. Josh. iii, 6; vi, 6.

**4. Brought up the ark**—From Zion to Moriah; from the tabernacle of David to the most holy place of the temple. This is spoken of as an *ascent*, or *going up*, of the ark, though Moriah was lower than Zion; for the Israelite conceived the mountain of the temple as the highest of all mountains, (Psa. lxxviii, 15; Micah iv, 1,) and spoke of going up to it as they did of going up to Jerusalem. So in this same verse the tabernacle is spoken of as *brought up* to the temple from Gibeon, though Gibeon is higher than any mountain of Jerusalem. **Tabernacle of the congregation**—This old structure, a sacred relic of Moses and the elder fathers, but doubtless bearing many marks of the ravages of time, had been standing for a long time on the high place of Gibeon. 2 Chron. i, 3. But not con-

vessels that *were* in the tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring up. **5** And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, *were* with him before the ark, <sup>a</sup>sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. **6** And the priests <sup>b</sup>brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto <sup>c</sup>his place, into the oracle of the

o 2 Sam. 6. 13. — h 2 Sam. 6. 17. — i Exod. 26. 33, 34; chap. 6. 19. — k Chap. 6. 27.

taining the ark, it had lost much of its sanctity in the eyes of the people, and only served to divide and distract the public worship. It was time to put an end to such confusion; and so the old tabernacle was brought up and stored away among the sacred treasures of the new and glorious temple. **All the holy vessels**—The golden altar, the golden candlestick, the table of showbread, and probably other shrines. Josephus says that "they set the candlestick, the table, and the golden altar in the temple before the most secret place, in the very same places wherein they stood till that time in the tabernacle." But this may be reasonably doubted in view of the fact that Solomon made altar, tables, and candlesticks all new for this purpose. See notes on chap. vii, 48, 49. Still the old ones may have been placed near the new. Among the sacred relics the brazen serpent was preserved until the days of Hezekiah. 2 Kings xviii, 4.

**5. Before the ark, sacrificing**—Not, as the Vulgate, *were walking with him before the ark*; or, as Josephus, "the king and all the people *went before*, rendering the ground moist with sacrifices." But rather, before the ark was borne into the temple, Solomon and all the multitude assembled *in front of it*, that is, in sight of it, and offered sacrifices. Thus Thenius: "The ark has already reached the inner court, and there, before it is brought into its appointed place, while it is set down for the time upon the steps of the porch, the king and people offer a solemn sacrifice *in its presence*." **Could not be told**—See note on chap. iii, 4.

**6. Under the wings of the cherubim**—That is, under the wings of the

house, to the most holy place, *even* <sup>a</sup>under the wings of the cherubim. **7** For the cherubim spread forth *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim covered the ark and the staves thereof above. **8** And they <sup>b</sup>drew out the staves, that the <sup>c</sup>ends of the staves were seen out in the <sup>d</sup>holy place before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day.

l Exod. 25. 14, 15. — 2 Heb. *heads*.  
3 Or, *ark*: as 2 Chron. 5. 9.

colossal cherubim that had already been built within the oracle. See notes and cut at chap. vi, 27.

**8. Drew out the staves**—"That is, they drew the staves, after the ark was set down in the most holy place, so far forward, that their ends could be observed from the sanctuary by the elevations on the vail, which might be seen in the sanctuary itself, but not without. The object of this cannot be determined with certainty. Some of the rabbies were of opinion that by this means the high priest on the great day of atonement was enabled to enter between the staves directly before the ark."—*Keil*. Others suggest that the drawing out of the staves was a sign that now at last the ark had reached "the place of its rest," and was not to be carried about any more. Since **the ends of the staves** were visible from the holy place, it would certainly appear that the ark was placed lengthwise east and west within the oracle, for the staves which were on the longer sides of the ark would not have shown their ends by being drawn forward if they had extended north and south. **They were not seen without**—The darkness of the inner temple, and the golden altar between the place of these staves and the porch, would of course prevent their being seen by any except those who were in the holy place, and near by the golden altar. **Unto this day**—This must have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and is therefore evidence that this account of the dedication was written while the temple was yet standing. The compiler of Kings did not deem it necessary to erase this remark from the older document which he seems to have used.

<sup>d</sup> *There was nothing in the ark* <sup>a</sup> save the two tables of stone, which Moses <sup>e</sup> put there at Horeb, <sup>4</sup> when the Lord made a *covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. **10** And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the *holy place*, that the cloud <sup>f</sup> filled the house of the Lord, **11** So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord. **12** <sup>g</sup> Then spake Solomon, The Lord

<sup>m</sup> Exod. 25. 21; Deut. 10. 2.—<sup>n</sup> Deut. 10. 5; Heb. 9. 4.—<sup>o</sup> Exod. 40. 20.—<sup>4</sup> Or, *where*.—<sup>p</sup> Exod. 34. 27, 28; Deut. 4. 13; verse 21.—<sup>q</sup> Exod. 40. 34, 35; 2 Chron. 5. 13, 14; 7. 2.

**9. Nothing in the ark save the two tables**—These were apparently all, according to the Old Testament writers, that was ever placed in the ark. The pot of manna and Aaron's rod were laid up *before the Testimony*, (Exod. xvi, 34; Num. xvii, 10,) but this alone leaves it undecided whether they were placed in the ark or by the side of it. According to Heb. xi, 4, however, they were in the ark, which also held the Testimony; and this latter passage doubtless expresses the Jewish traditional view of their position *before the Lord* and *before the Testimony*, as stated in the passages referred to in Exodus and Numbers. The pot and the rod had probably become lost during the ark's captivity among the Philistines.

**10. The cloud filled the house**—Covering all the sacred shrines and awing every heart, as at the dedication of the tabernacle. See Exod. xl, 34, and references. This display of Divine glory, while it filled all hearts with solemnity, was a token and pledge to Israel that Jehovah was still present to bless and honour them.

**12. The Lord said**—A reference to such Scriptures as Exod. xix, 9; xx, 21; Lev. vi, 2; Deut. iv, 11; v, 22. In some divine communication of his will to Solomon, like that recorded in chap. vi, 11–13, Jehovah may also have repeated this declaration. The temple, like the tabernacle, was built according to Divine directions. **He would dwell in the thick darkness**—He would have the most holy place, in

said that he would dwell <sup>a</sup> in the thick darkness. **13** <sup>b</sup> I have surely built thee a house to dwell in, <sup>c</sup> a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. **14** And the king turned his face about, and <sup>d</sup> blessed all the congregation of Israel: and all the congregation of Israel stood: **15** And he said, <sup>e</sup> Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which <sup>f</sup> spake with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled *it*, saying, **16** <sup>g</sup> Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of

<sup>r</sup> 2 Chron. 6. 1, &c.—<sup>s</sup> Lev. 16. 2; Psa. 18. 11; 97. 2.—<sup>t</sup> 2 Sa. 7. 13.—<sup>u</sup> Psa. 132. 14.—<sup>v</sup> 2 Sa. 6. 18.—<sup>w</sup> Luke 1. 68.—<sup>x</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 5, 25.—<sup>y</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 6; 2 Chron. 6. 5, &c.

which the symbol of his presence was to dwell, concealed in utter darkness. This fact had its typical significance, indicating that the depths of mystery in the Divine nature and power are past finding out. See on chap. vi, 31; Psa. xviii, 11; xcvii, 2.

**13. A settled place... for ever**—He had thus done according to the Divine counsel and direction, and with his face turned towards the holiest place he probably uttered these words as in prayer. The *forever* of this verse is but another echo of that gracious promise to David, (2 Sam. vii, 16, note,) which was the germ of all later Messianic prophecies. The eye of faith and the vision of prophecy alike associate the ark of the covenant and its visible dwellingplace with an endless future; for though the patterns of the heavenly pass away, it is only because they are superseded by more glorious manifestations of the heavenly. Heb. ix, 23.

**14. Turned his face**—From the most holy place towards the assembled multitude without the temple, in the court. While uttering his benedictions on the people, and his prayer of dedication, he occupied a brazen scaffold, which was placed in the midst of the court. 2 Chron. vi, 13.

15–21. These verses contain an appropriate narration of the most interesting facts connected with the planning and building of the temple, and without them the services of the dedication would have been incomplete. See notes on 2 Sam. vii.

all the tribes of Israel to build a house, that <sup>2</sup>my name might be therein; but I chose <sup>a</sup>David to be over my people Israel. **17** And <sup>b</sup>it was in the heart of David my father to build a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. **18** <sup>c</sup>And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build a house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart. **19** Nevertheless <sup>d</sup>thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name. **20** And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, <sup>e</sup>as the LORD promised, and have built a house for the name of the LORD God of Israel. **21** And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein is <sup>f</sup>the covenant of the LORD, which he made

<sup>z</sup> Verse 29; Deut. 12, 11.—<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. 16.1; 2 Sam. 7. 8; 1 Chr. 28. 4.—<sup>b</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 2; 1 Chr. 17. 1.—<sup>c</sup> 2 Chr. 6. 8, 9.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 5, 12, 13; chap. 5. 3, 5.—<sup>e</sup> 1 Chron. 28. 5, 6.—<sup>f</sup> Verse 9; Deut. 31. 26.—<sup>g</sup> 2 Chron. 6. 12, &c.—<sup>h</sup> Exod. 9. 33; Ezra

with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt. **22** And Solomon stood before <sup>g</sup>the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, and <sup>h</sup>spread forth his hands toward heaven: **23** And he said, LORD God of Israel, <sup>i</sup>there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, <sup>k</sup>who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that <sup>l</sup>walk before thee with all their heart: **24** Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as <sup>m</sup>it is this day. **25** Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, <sup>n</sup>“There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; <sup>o</sup>so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked

9. 5; Isa. 1. 15.—<sup>i</sup> Exod. 15. 11; 2 Sam. 7. 22.—<sup>k</sup> Deut. 7. 9; Neh. 1. 5; Dan. 9. 4.—<sup>l</sup> Gen. 17. 1; chap. 3. 6; 2 Kings 20. 8.—<sup>m</sup> 2 Sa. 7. 12, 16; chap. 2. 4.—<sup>n</sup> Heb. *There shall not be cut off unto thee a man from my sight.*—<sup>o</sup> Heb. *only if.*

**22. Solomon stood**—The word *stood* does not here designate Solomon's posture in prayer, for that was *kneeling*, (verse 54; 2 Chron vi, 13,) but rather the position he occupied relatively to the altar and the congregation. Before he kneeled down in prayer he stood in the presence of all the people, and in that posture addressed them and blessed them. **Before the altar of the Lord**—He was both before the altar and in presence of the congregation. “Solomon, in all his other glory, even on his ivory throne, looked not so great as he did now.”—*Henry*. The altar here referred to was the great brazen altar of burnt offerings which stood in the court. **Spread forth his hands**—A usual custom in prayer. Compare Exod. ix, 33; Ezra ix, 5; Ps. xxviii, 2; Isa. i, 15.

#### SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION, 23-53.

This prayer “is one of unprecedented length, and remarkable as combining the conception of the infinity of the Divine presence with the hope that the Divine mercies will be drawn down on the nation by the concentration of the national devotions, and even of the de-

votion of foreign nations, towards this fixed locality.”—*Stanley*. It is reproduced in substantially the same language and order in 2 Chron. vi, 14-42, and is a model most appropriately read and followed in the dedication of houses of Christian worship. It consists of three parts: 1.) Adoration for the fulfilment of the promise to David. Verses 23, 24. 2.) Prayer for its continued fulfilment, (verses 25, 26,) and for blessings upon the concentration of worship at the temple. Verses 27-30. 3.) Supplication for *specific blessings*, (verses 31-53,) namely, in cases of trespass, (verses 31, 32;) when smitten before enemies, (verses 33, 34;) in times of drought, (verses 35, 36,) famine, or plague, (verses 37-40;) for the devout stranger, (verses 41-43;) for success in battle, (verses 44, 45;) for deliverance from captivity, (verses 46-53.) These prayers for specific blessings are seven, thus corresponding in number with the seven petitions of the Lord's prayer.

**25. So that thy children take heed**—Better, *only if thy children, etc.*, as in the margin. The Divine promises can be fully realized only on conditions of righteousness in the people. They comfort those who “walk uprightly”

before me. **26** <sup>a</sup> And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father. **27** But <sup>o</sup> will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and <sup>p</sup> heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? **28** Yet <sup>q</sup> have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: **29** That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of which thou hast said, <sup>r</sup> My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make <sup>s</sup> toward this place. **30** <sup>t</sup> And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray <sup>u</sup> toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace: and when thou hearest, forgive. **31** If any man trespass against his neighbour, <sup>v</sup> and <sup>w</sup> an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: **32** Then

<sup>n</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 25.—<sup>o</sup> 2 Chr. 2. 6; Isa. 66. 1; Jer. 23. 24; Acts 7. 49; 17. 24.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Cor. 12. 2.—<sup>q</sup> 2 Chron. 6. 19; Psal. 141. 2; Dan. 9. 17; Luke 18. 1, 7.—<sup>r</sup> Deut. 12. 11.—<sup>s</sup> Dan. 6. 10.—<sup>t</sup> 7 Or, *in this place*.—<sup>u</sup> 2 Chr. 20. 9; Neh. 1. 6.—<sup>v</sup> 8 Or, *in this place*.—<sup>w</sup> 9 Heb. *and he require an oath*

**27. Will God indeed dwell on the earth**—An expression of pious wonder and astonishment, and, with the sequel, an utter refutation of those rationalistic critics who affirm that the Israelites had no worthy and enlarged conceptions of Deity.

**31. An oath be laid upon him**—According to the requirement of the law in Exod. xxii, 7–11, which provided that if a man suspect his neighbour of any kind of trespass, and has no evidence to convict him, he can require him to make oath of his integrity. This clear reference to the laws of the Pentateuch, as well as many other expressions in this prayer, serve also to confute rationalism in the assertion of a late origin of the books of Moses.

**32. Judge thy servants**—Human tribunals often clear the guilty and condemn the righteous, but Solomon prays that in every case of oaths concerning trespass brought before that altar, the right may be vindicated.

**37. Blasting**—Destruction of grain by

hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, <sup>x</sup> condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness. **33** <sup>y</sup> When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and <sup>z</sup> shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee <sup>aa</sup> in this house: **34** Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers. **35** <sup>ab</sup> When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: **36** Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou <sup>ac</sup> teach them <sup>ad</sup> the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance. **37** <sup>ae</sup> If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, *or* if

*of him*, Lev. 5. 1.—<sup>u</sup> Exod. 22. 11.—<sup>v</sup> Deut. 25. 1.—<sup>w</sup> Lev. 26. 17: Deut. 28. 25.—<sup>x</sup> Lev. 26. 39, 40; Neh. 1. 9.—<sup>y</sup> 10 Or, *towards*.—<sup>z</sup> Lev. 26. 19; Deut. 28. 23.—<sup>aa</sup> Psal. 25. 4; 27. 11; 94. 12; 143. 8.—<sup>ab</sup> 1 Sam. 12. 23.—<sup>ac</sup> Lev. 26. 16, 25, 26; Deut. 28. 21, 22, 27, 38, 42, 52; 2 Chron. 20. 9.

a pernicious east wind. Com. Gen. xli, 6. Deut. xxviii, 22; Amos iv, 9. **Mildew**

—יֵרֶקֶן, *yellowness*. A disease of grain,

produced in the East by a hot, poisonous wind which turns the ears yellow.

**Locust**—A destructive insect, swarms of which frequently devastate Palestine and neighbouring lands. See on Exod. x, 4. Says an Eastern traveller: "With the burning south winds there come from the interior of Arabia and from the most southern parts of Persia clouds of locusts, whose ravages to these countries are as grievous, and nearly as sudden, as those of the heaviest hail in Europe. We witnessed them twice. It is difficult to express the effect produced on us by the sight of the whole atmosphere filled on all sides and to a great height by an innumerable quantity of these insects, whose flight was slow and uniform, and whose noise resembled that of rain; the sky was darkened, and the light of the sun was considerably weakened

there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their <sup>11</sup> cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness *there be*; **38** What <sup>a</sup> prayer and supplication soever be *made* by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: **39** Then hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, *even* thou only, <sup>a</sup> knowest the hearts of all the children of men;) **40** <sup>a</sup> That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers. **41** Moreover concerning a stranger, that *is* not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; **42** (For they shall hear of thy great

name, and of thy <sup>a</sup> strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house: **43** Hear thou in heaven thy dwellingplace, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for: <sup>a</sup> that all people of the earth may know thy name, to <sup>b</sup> fear thee, as *do* thy people Israel; and that they may know that <sup>12</sup> this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name. **44** If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto the Lord <sup>13</sup> toward the city which thou hast chosen, and *toward* the house that I have built for thy name: **45** Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their <sup>14</sup> cause. **46** If they sin against thee, (<sup>a</sup> for *there is* no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them, and

<sup>11</sup> Or, *jurisdiction*.—<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 5, 13; Psal. 50. 15; 91. 15; Isa. 37. 4, 15; Joel 2. 17; Amos 7. 1, 6.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 16. 7; 1 Chron. 28. 9; Psal. 11. 4; Jer. 17. 10; Acts 1. 24.—<sup>e</sup> Psal. 130. 4.—<sup>f</sup> Deut. 3. 24.—<sup>g</sup> 1 Sam. 17. 46; 2 Kings 19. 19;

Psal. 67. 2.—<sup>h</sup> Psal. 102. 15.—<sup>12</sup> Hebrew, *thy name is called upon this house*.—<sup>13</sup> Heb. *the way of the city*.—<sup>14</sup> Or, *right*.—<sup>i</sup> 2 Chr. 6. 36; Prov. 20. 9; Eccles. 7. 20; James 3. 2; 1 John 1. 8, 10.

In a moment the terraces of the houses, the streets, and all the fields were covered by these insects, and in two days they had nearly devoured all the leaves of the plants."—*Olivier*. **Caterpillar**

—The word חָסִיל, *chasil*, from חָסַל, *to strip off*, or *devour*, can hardly designate the caterpillar, though, besides here and the parallel passage in 2 Chron. vi, 28, it is so rendered in Psalm lxxviii, 46; Isa. xxxiv, 4; Joel i, 4; ii, 25. In Deut. xxviii, 38 the ravages of the locusts are represented by the verb חָסַל, and it is therefore better to

understand by the word *chasil* a kind of locust, specially noted for stripping off and devouring the very last vestige of vegetation, even after other destructive insects had gone before it. Compare Joel i, 4.

**38. The plague of his own heart**—That particular form of misfortune, pain, moral darkness, and confusion of spirit, which each man may recognise for himself as a Divine judgment upon him for his sins. Happy he who is able to discern the plague of his own heart, and by timely repentance escapes a hopeless ruin!

**41. Concerning a stranger**—Moses had made provision for the pious Gen-

tiles to worship and sacrifice at the tabernacle, (Num. xv, 14–16,) and Solomon presumes that strangers will of course learn of the God of Israel, and come to worship at his temple. That strangers did thus come we not only infer from such provisions being made for them in the Old Testament, but also know from the facts recorded John xii, 20; Acts viii, 27.

**43. That all people of the earth may know thy name**—Here is one of the Old Testament intimations of the universality of the true religion and true worship of God. Though the national consciousness of Israel was that of separateness from all other nations, yet at times the Spirit lifted it above that exclusiveness, and thrilled it with a momentary grasping after universal brotherhood.

**44. Whithersoever thou shalt send them**—This indicates that the battle referred to is one undertaken by Divine counsel or sanction, as was every righteous war for the defence or honour of the nation.

**46. No man that sinneth not**—Or, rather, *That may not sin*. The statement is not made with reference to the possibilities of gracious attainment in the Christian life, but to the ordinary facts of human history. The meaning

deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives <sup>k</sup> unto the land of the enemy, far or near; **47** <sup>l</sup> Yet if they shall <sup>m</sup> bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives. <sup>n</sup> saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; **48** And so <sup>o</sup> return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and <sup>p</sup> pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: **49** Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwellingplace, and maintain their <sup>q</sup> cause, **50** And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and <sup>r</sup> give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them: **51** For <sup>s</sup> they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, <sup>t</sup> from the midst of the furnace of iron: **52** That <sup>u</sup> thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. **53** For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, <sup>v</sup> to be thine inheritance, <sup>w</sup> as thou spakest by the hand of Moses

thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God. **54** And it was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord, he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from <sup>x</sup> kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. **55** And he stood, <sup>y</sup> and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice, saying, **56** Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised: <sup>z</sup> there hath not <sup>aa</sup> failed one word of all his good promise, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. **57** The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: <sup>ab</sup> let him not leave us, nor forsake us: **58** That he may <sup>ac</sup> incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers. **59** And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord, be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night, that he maintain the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel <sup>ad</sup> at all times, as the matter shall require: **60** <sup>ae</sup> That all the people of the earth may know that <sup>af</sup> the Lord is God, and that there is none else. **61** Let your <sup>ag</sup> heart therefore be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day. **62** And <sup>ah</sup> the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the Lord. **63** And Solomon offered

<sup>k</sup> Lev. 26. 34, 44; Deut. 28. 36, 64. — <sup>l</sup> Lev. 26. 40. — <sup>m</sup> Heb. *bring back to their heart*. — <sup>n</sup> Neh. 1. 6; Psa. 106. 6; Dan. 9. 5. — <sup>o</sup> Jer. 29. 12-14. — <sup>p</sup> Dan. 6. 10. — <sup>q</sup> Or, *right*. — <sup>r</sup> Ezra 2. 6; Psa. 106. 46. — <sup>s</sup> Deut. 9. 29; Neh. 1. 10. — <sup>t</sup> Deut. 4. 20; Jer. 11. 4. — <sup>u</sup> Verse 29; 2 Chron. 8. 40. — <sup>v</sup> Exod. 19. 5; Deut. 9. 26, 29; 14. 2.

<sup>x</sup> Psa. 95. 6; Luke 22. 41; Acts 20. 36; 21. 5. — <sup>y</sup> 2 Sam. 6. 18. — <sup>z</sup> Deut. 12. 10; Josh. 21. 45; 23. 14. — <sup>aa</sup> Heb. *fulfill*. — <sup>ab</sup> Deut. 31. 6; Josh. 1. 5. — <sup>ac</sup> Psa. 119. 36. — <sup>ad</sup> Heb. *the thing of a day in his day*. — <sup>ae</sup> Josh. 4. 24; 1 Sam. 17. 46; 2 Kin. 19. 19. — <sup>af</sup> Deut. 4. 35, 39. — <sup>ag</sup> Chap. 11. 4; 15. 3, 14; 2 Kings 20. 3. — <sup>ah</sup> 2 Chron. 7. 4, &c.

is, There is no man, and no nation, that can claim to be beyond the possibility of sinning. Israel must not assume, that because they are the chosen people they may not, by running into sin, draw down the Divine anger in bitter judgments upon them. But here is surely no such universal proposition as to involve, (as some assume,) that even the New Testament saint whose life is hid with Christ in God, sees never in this life the hour in which he does not sin. Such teaching is as absurd as it is unscriptural.

**51. Furnace of iron**—Metaphorical description of the bitter bondage and

inhuman persecutions of Egypt. Compare marginal references.

**54-61.** Of this blessing and exhortation, which Solomon uttered at the close of his prayer, the writer in Chronicles makes no mention; but he adds to the prayer (2 Chron. vi, 41, 42) a supplication that Jehovah would arise, and with the ark of his strength enter the holiest place; that the priests might be clothed with salvation and the saints rejoice in goodness; and that the mercies shown to David might be remembered.

**62. The king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice**—They did it by

a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered unto the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel<sup>d</sup> dedicated the house of the Lord. **64** \*The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that *was* before the house of the Lord: for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings: because<sup>e</sup> the brazen altar that *was* before the Lord *was* too little to receive the burnt offer-

ings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings. **65** And at that time Solomon held <sup>a</sup>a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from <sup>b</sup>the entering in of Hamath unto <sup>c</sup>the river of Egypt, before the Lord our God, <sup>d</sup>seven days and seven days, *even* fourteen days. **66** <sup>e</sup>On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they <sup>f</sup>blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

<sup>a</sup> Num. 7. 10. 84: 2 Chron. 2. 4; 7. 5; John 10. 22.  
<sup>e</sup> 2 Chron. 7. 7. — <sup>f</sup> 2 Chr. 4. 1. — <sup>g</sup> Verse 2: Lev. 23. 34. — <sup>h</sup> Num. 34. 8; Josh. 13. 5; Judges

3. 3; 2 Kings 14. 25. — <sup>i</sup> Gen. 15. 18; Num. 34. 5.  
<sup>k</sup> 2 Chron. 7. 3. — <sup>l</sup> 2 Chron. 7. 9, 10. —  
19 Or, *thanked*.

the hand of their priests, whose sole prerogative it was to perform that sacred service. According to 2 Chron. vii, 1, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offerings.

**63. Twenty thousand oxen**—"If, besides the elders, heads of families and tribes, all Israel from the region of Hamath to the river of Egypt, in great assembly, appeared at this festival, there may have easily been one hundred thousand fathers, and twenty thousand elders, heads of families and tribes, assembled. Now if, on an average, every father offered only one sheep, every elder an ox, and the king, out of his abundance, two thousand oxen and two thousand sheep, the number of victims stated will not appear too great. Whether a man could consume all the flesh of these offerings at the festival or not is a matter of no consequence, as the law in this case commanded the burning of the remainder. Leviticus vii, 17; xix, 6."—*Keil*.

**64. The same day**—The same time that the multitude of these sacrifices were offered. **Hallow**—Sanctify; consecrate. The purpose for which this inner court was hallowed bears further testimony to the vast number of the sacrifices offered on that occasion. The brazen altar was insufficient, and therefore Solomon caused the erection of other altars in the midst of the court, thus sanctifying the whole middle of its area for sacrificial purposes.

**65. Held a feast**—The feast of dedication, followed by the feast of tabernacles. **Hamath**—An ancient city of

Syria, situated on the Orontes. See on Num. xiii, 21; xxxiv, 8; Josh. xiii, 5.

**River of Egypt**—Often mentioned as the southern limit of the Land of Promise. See on Genesis xv, 18; Numbers xxxiv, 5; Joshua xv, 4. Some think, but without sufficient reason, that the Nile is meant; but the reference is, doubtless, to the *Wady-el-Arish*, which runs northerly through the middle of the Sinaitic Peninsula and empties into the Mediterranean Sea. This formed a southwestern border towards Egypt. **Seven days and seven days**—That is, the feast of dedication and the feast of tabernacles lasted each seven days, making the entire festival to continue fourteen days.

**66. On the eighth day**—The day following the last seven days' feast, which was the twenty-third day of the seventh month. 2 Chronicles vii, 10. **Went unto their tents**—That is, went home. Compare note on 1 Sam. xvii, 54.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE LORD'S SECOND APPEARANCE TO SOLOMON, 1-9.

Whether this appearance of the Lord to Solomon followed immediately after the dedication of the temple, or not until after the completion of his palace and all his great works, is a matter of dispute. Some hold that it took place the night after the day of dedication, but the text seems clearly to place it after he had finished all his works. The revelation seems, indeed, like an answer to the prayer of dedication which Solomon had just offered; and we would natu-

## CHAPTER IX.

AND <sup>a</sup>it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, <sup>b</sup>and the king's house, and <sup>c</sup>all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, <sup>2</sup>That the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, <sup>d</sup>as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. <sup>3</sup>And the Lord said unto him, <sup>e</sup>I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, <sup>f</sup>to put my name there for ever; <sup>g</sup>and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. <sup>4</sup>And if thou wilt <sup>h</sup>walk before me, <sup>i</sup>as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and

<sup>a</sup> 2 Chronicles 7. 11. &c.—<sup>b</sup> Chapter 7. 1.—<sup>c</sup> 2 Chronicles 8. 6.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 3. 5.—<sup>e</sup> 2 Kings 20. 5; Psalm 10. 17.—<sup>f</sup> Chapter 8. 29.—<sup>g</sup> Deuteronomy 11. 12.—<sup>h</sup> Genesis 17. 1.—<sup>i</sup> Chapter 11. 4, 6, 38; 14. 8; 15. 5.

rally suppose it to have been given immediately after the dedication. But is this sufficient reason to reject the obvious meaning of the text? Jehovah did immediately answer the prayer and bless the worship by sending down fire to consume the sacrifices; and often may he have come to Solomon by the Word of the Lord, (chap. vi, 11,) both while the temple was building and after it was finished. But this second and peculiarly significant appearance, bearing particular resemblance to the first appearance at Gibeon, (chap. iii. 4-15,) may well have occurred at a later period of his reign, after the completion of all his great works, and the attainment of all his proudest fame, for the purpose of confirming him in the truth, and warning and guarding him against apostasy, to which he was now, by reason of his extended power and glory, more than ever exposed. We need not wonder that the Lord's words in the revelation refer directly to a prayer uttered years before, for the prayers of the saints are ever fresh to his mind; and Solomon never uttered another prayer more impressive, or more important and memorable to himself, than that uttered at the feast of dedication. The sacred writer records this Divine communication here, not because it followed immediately after the prayer of Solomon, but because, though given

wilt keep my statutes and my judgments; <sup>5</sup>Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, <sup>k</sup>as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. <sup>6</sup><sup>l</sup>But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them; <sup>7</sup><sup>m</sup>Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed <sup>n</sup>for my name, will I cast out of my sight; <sup>o</sup>and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people: <sup>8</sup>And <sup>p</sup>at this house, which is high, every one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and

<sup>k</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 12, 16; chap. 2. 4; 6. 12; 1 Chron. 22. 10; Psa. 132. 12.—<sup>l</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 14; 2 Chron. 7. 19, 20; Psa. 89. 30, &c.—<sup>m</sup> Deut. 4. 26; 2 Kings 17. 23; 25. 21.—<sup>n</sup> Jer. 7. 14.—<sup>o</sup> Deut. 28. 37; Psa. 44. 14.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Chron. 7. 21.

long after, it had so much reference to that prayer.

1. **All Solomon's desire**—All that he desired in the way of buildings, not only at Jerusalem, but throughout his whole realm. Compare verse 19 and 2 Chron. viii, 6.

2. **As he had appeared unto him at Gibeon**—Namely, in a dream by night, (chap. iii, 5; 2 Chron. vii, 12,) reminding him of the covenant with David, and conditioning his future happiness on his obedience. These two appearances to Solomon marked two memorable turning points in his career. The one given him in the simplicity of his youth (chap. iii, 7) lifted him into an element of wisdom and favour with both God and man; the other, given in the blaze of his worldly glory, was, alas! soon followed by shameful idolatries. Like Saul, when he was little in his own eyes the Lord made him great, (1 Sam. xv, 17;) but when exalted among men, he lightly observed the Divine counsels.

7. **A proverb and a byword**—The very name Israel will become a proverbial expression significant of disastrous failure; nay, more—a byword, a pointed, sarcastic term, ever suggestive of scorn and mockery. Compare Deut. xxviii, 37.

8. **This house, which is high**—This rendering is an attempt to emend the

shall hiss; and they shall say, 'Why hath the LORD done thus unto this land, and to this house? 9 And they shall answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them: therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

10 And 'it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had

<sup>q</sup> Deut. 29, 24-26; Jer. 22, 8, 9.—<sup>r</sup> 2 Chron. 7, 22; Jer. 2, 19; Lamentations 2, 16, 17; Ezekiel 36, 17, 20.

text by the aid of 2 Chron. vii, 21, but is altogether unnecessary and erroneous. The Hebrew reads: *This house shall be high*; that is, shall be a conspicuous example of Divine judgment on a chosen people for their sins. "It will be exposed aloft, on its high hill, as a laughingstock to the scorn of passers-by, who will be astonished at it."—*Wordsworth*.

#### SUNDRY NOTICES OF SOLOMON'S ACTS, 10-28.

This section furnishes one of the most noticeable instances of the fragmentary manner in which some portions of the Old Testament history have been compiled. The writer evidently gathered excerpts from more complete historical and statistical documents, and arranged them in their present form of a rapidly sketched abridgment, the meaning of which is in some places hard to determine.

10. **Twenty years**—Seven in building the temple, (chap. vi, 38,) and thirteen on the palace. Chap. vii, 1.

11. **Twenty cities**—One city for every year of building. This gift of Solomon was evidently a token of his good-will to Hiram, and for a memorial of the aid given by the king of Tyre in the building of the temple and palace, but not a payment for service received. But what right, it has been asked, had Solomon to give away any part of the inheritance of the Lord's people into the hands of a heathen king? According to the law (Levit. xxv, 23) the land could not be sold forever; much less given away. We might answer, This was not the first nor last instance in

built the two houses, the house of the LORD, and the king's house, 11 ' (*Now* Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. 12 And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they 'pleased him not. 13 And he said, What cities *are* these which thou hast given me, my brother? "And he

<sup>s</sup> Chapter 6, 37, 38; 7, 1; 2 Chron. 8, 1.—<sup>t</sup> 2 Chron. 8, 2.—<sup>u</sup> Heb. *were not right in his eyes*.—<sup>v</sup> Josh. 19, 27.

which this great king stepped aside from the law of Moses. Already, contrary to the express commands of the law, he had multiplied horses and chariots. But in this case the appearance of transgression largely disappears in the fact that these cities, when given to Hiram, were peopled not by Israelites but by heathens. Solomon may have regarded it as a prudent policy to hand over the government of these heathen cities, which were evidently of no great worth, to his friendly neighbour, who had rendered him so much service in building the Lord's house.

**Land of Galilee**—Not the entire province of this name as it existed under the Romans, but only the northern part of the land allotted to the tribe of Naphtali. Compare Josh. xx, 7. According to Josephus, these twenty cities lay not far from Tyre.

12. **They pleased him not**—"These twenty cities were mere villages, of course, and it is a genuine Eastern trick to dignify a small present with a pompous name."—*Thomson*. The Phenicians being a maritime and commercial people, Hiram might naturally have coveted some of Solomon's coast-towns, and was therefore displeased with the gift of a comparatively useless inland region, and so restored the cities to Solomon. 2 Chron. viii, 2.

13. **My brother**—Used here and in chap. xx, 33, as often at the present day in the East, as a term of friendly intercourse. Compare 1 Macc. x, 18; xi, 30; 2 Macc. xi, 22. **Cabul**—"Which name," says Josephus, "if it be interpreted according to the language of the Phenicians, denotes *what does not*

called them the land of <sup>2</sup> Cabul unto this day. **14** And Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold. **15** And this <sup>is</sup> the reason of <sup>the</sup> levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and <sup>6</sup> Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and <sup>7</sup> Hazor, and <sup>8</sup> Megiddo, and <sup>9</sup> Gezer.

<sup>2</sup> That is, *Displeasing*, or, *Dirty*.—*v* Chap. 5. 13.—*v* Verse 24; 2 Sam. 5. 9.—*x* Josh. 19. 26.—*y* Josh. 17. 11.

*please.*" The Cabul of Josh. xix, 27 may have been one of the twenty cities, and to show his dissatisfaction he may have applied the name of that little insignificant town to the whole district. After Hiram restored the cities, Solomon built them more nobly and peopled them with Israelites. 2 Chron. viii, 2. But notwithstanding this displeasure on the part of Hiram, the friendly relations of these two monarchs seem to have lasted as long as they lived. **Unto this day**—The day when this document was written.

**14. Hiram sent... gold**—Probably not as a present, but as a loan; and the verse may be regarded as a fuller statement of his furnishing Solomon with gold, which is more briefly noticed in verse 11. In view of the vast profusion of gold with which Solomon adorned the temple and the palace, and other works throughout his whole kingdom, we need not wonder that he gathered gold from all possible quarters.

**15. The reason of the levy**—The levy of men mentioned chap. v, 13 was used, as we here learn, for building other works than the temple. **Millo**—The fortress on Zion, which had, perhaps, become somewhat dilapidated. See note on 2 Sam. v, 9. **Wall of Jerusalem**—He repaired the breaches in the wall which David built, and also extended the walls, and probably in some places built entirely new and nobler ones. Compare chap. xi, 27. **Hazor**—The ancient capital of Jabin, in the north of Palestine. See on Josh. xi, 1. **Megiddo**—In the great plain of Esdraelon. See on Josh. xii, 21. **Gezer**—A city west or northwest of Jerusalem, and between it and the Mediterranean Sea. See on Josh. x, 33.

**16** For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, <sup>a</sup> and slain the Canaanites that dwell in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife **17** And Solomon built Gezer, and <sup>b</sup> Beth-horon the nether, **18** And <sup>c</sup> Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in

<sup>a</sup> Josh. 16. 10; Judges 1. 29.—*a* Josh. 16. 10.—*b* Josh. 16. 3; 21. 22; 2 Chron. 8. 5.—*c* Josh. 19. 44; 2 Chron. 8. 4, 6, & c.

**16. Pharaoh... had... taken Gezer**—The date and circumstances of this conquest are wrapped in perfect mystery. **Canaanites that dwelt in the city**—These had not been expelled in Joshua's time. Josh. xvi, 10. **A present unto his daughter**—"Though in the East husbands generally pay for their wives, yet dower is given in some cases. Sargon gave Cilicia as a dowry with his daughter when he married her to Ambris, king of Tubal. Antiochus Soter gave his claims on Macedonia as a dowry to his step-daughter Phila when she married Antigonus Gonatas. Coele-Syria and Palestine were promised as dowry to Ptolemy Epiphanes when he married Cleopatra, sister of Antiochus the Great."—*Rawlinson*.

**17. Solomon built Gezer**—That is, rebuilt and fortified the city on the ruined site of the former town. So doubtless of all the other cities mentioned in this chapter, which had existence before. The work of Solomon was that of rebuilding, repairing or enlarging, and fortifying. **Beth-horon the nether**—See on Josh. x, 10.

**18. Baalath**—Probably identical with the town of this name in the tribe of Dan. Josh. xix, 44. Some have supposed it to be the same as Baalbek in Coele-Syria, whose splendid ruins are still the wonder of the modern traveler. **Tadmor**—Such is the name in the margin of the Hebrew Bible, (*keri*), and in 2 Chron. viii, 4; but in the Hebrew text of this verse it is *Tumar*, which seems to have been the original name, and means a *palm tree*. The place probably received this name from the many palm trees which were planted within and around it, and hence the later Greek and Roman name Palmyra, city

the land, **19** And all the cities of store that Solomon had, and cities for <sup>d</sup>his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and <sup>e</sup>that which Solomon <sup>e</sup>desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion. **20** *And all the people that were left of*

*d* Chap. 4. 26. — *3* Heb. *the desire of Solomon which he desired.* — *e* Verse 1.

of palms. The site of this celebrated city was a fertile oasis in the great Syrian desert, midway between the Euphrates and Palestine, and served as a most important watering-station for the caravans which carried on commerce between the Western nations and those of the far East. Its importance to commerce was, perhaps, suggested to Solomon by Phœnician merchants, and his ready practical wisdom would not be slow to secure to his own dominion the advantage of such a control over the traffic between the East and the West as this central emporium would naturally give him. It was probably at first strongly built, and so garrisoned as to give protection and security to the caravans against the tribes of lawless Arabs which then, as now, infested those deserts, and exposed all travel and commerce to great danger and inconvenience. But the city soon rose to magnificence and luxury, and became a city of merchants, who monopolized the trade between the East and the West, buying up the products of Arabia and India and selling them again to the Western traders. Tadmor, probably soon after the death of Solomon, passed from the possession of the Hebrews to that of the Assyrians. It is not mentioned again in Scripture; but from other sources we learn that it passed through various fortunes under the Eastern kings, the Roman emperors, the Mohammedan khalifs, and was at last plundered and laid waste by the Mongol conqueror, Tamerlane. Its ruins were long unknown to Europeans, but were discovered towards the close of the seventeenth century. They occupy a sandy plain, slightly elevated above the surrounding desert, and consist of "scattered groups of columns and single monumental pillars, while everywhere the ground is thickly

the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which *were* not of the children of Israel, **21** Their children <sup>g</sup>that were left after them in the land, <sup>h</sup>whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, <sup>i</sup>upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of

*f* 2 Chron. 8. 7, &c. — *g* Judges 1. 21, 27, 29; 3. 1. *h* Josh. 15. 63; 17. 12. — *i* Judges 1. 28.

strewn with broken shafts, and great shapeless piles of ruins, all white and glistening in the bright sunlight. Like bleached bones on a long-neglected battle-field those ruins lie, lonely and forsaken." — PORTER, *Giant Cities of Bashan*. **In the wilderness**—In the great Syrian desert between Palestine and the Euphrates. **In the land**—The land of Solomon's dominion. The phrase is to be construed with *built* in verse 17. Solomon built in his land the cities here named.

**19. Cities of store**—In which were deposited corn, wine, and oil, (2 Chron. xxxii, 28,) and probably wares for purposes of trade, and provisions for the army. **Cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen**—Rather, for his *cavalry*. See note on chap. iv, 26. These cities for his chariots and his horses were probably "identical in part with the magazine-cities, and several of them situated on the northern boundary of his kingdom in the region of Hamath and on Lebanon, as must be inferred partly from the importance of the northern border to the security of the whole kingdom, partly from the consideration that Solomon had an adversary in Rezon of Damascus, (chap. xi, 23,) who might easily excite to rebellion the northern provinces which were first incorporated into the kingdom by David, and partly from the express statement of 2 Chron. xvi, 4, according to which there were magazine-cities in the land of Naphtali." — Keil. **That which Solomon desired to build**—That is, whatever in the way of buildings, gardens, or parks he desired. Compare Eccles. ii, 1–9.

**21. Levy a tribute of bondservice**—A considerable portion of the levies of men employed by Solomon in his public works was doubtless drawn from the ranks of the subjugated nations.

<sup>a</sup> bondservice unto this day. **22** But of the children of Israel did Solomon <sup>1</sup> make no bondmen: but they *were* men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen. **23** These *were* the chief of the officers that *were* over Solomon's work, <sup>m</sup> five hundred and fifty, which bare rule over the people that wrought in the work. **24** But <sup>a</sup> Pharaoh's daughter came up out of the city

of David unto <sup>o</sup> her house which *Solomon* had built for her: <sup>p</sup> then did he build Millo. **25** <sup>a</sup> And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord, and he burnt incense <sup>4</sup> upon the altar that *was* before the Lord. So he finished the house. **26** And <sup>r</sup> king Solomon made a navy of ships in <sup>s</sup> Ezion-geber, which *is* beside Elath, on the <sup>5</sup> shore of the Red

<sup>z</sup> See Gen. 9. 25, 26; Ezek. 2. 53, 58; Neh. 7. 57; 11. 3. — <sup>l</sup> Lev. 25. 39. — <sup>m</sup> See 2 Chron. 8. 10. — <sup>n</sup> Chap. 3. 1; 2 Chron. 8. 11. — <sup>o</sup> Chap. 7. 8. — <sup>p</sup> 2 Sam. 5. 9; chap. 11. 27; 2 Chron. 32. 5.

<sup>q</sup> 2 Chronicles 8. 12, 13, 16. — <sup>4</sup> Hebrew, *upon it*. — <sup>r</sup> 2 Chronicles 8. 17, 18. — <sup>s</sup> Numbers 33. 35; Deuteronomy 2. 8; chapter 22. 48. — <sup>5</sup> Hebrew, *lip*.

**22. His servants**—Holding positions of honourable trust in the court or in the royal service, and so distinguished from bondslaves. **Captains**—*Shalishim*. See note on 2 Samuel xxiii, 8. **Rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen**—The word *horsemen* here, as in verse 19, should be rendered *steeds*, or *cavalry*, and the rulers of the chariots and cavalry were the chief officers in these departments of the army.

**23. Five hundred and fifty**—See note on chap. v, 16.

**24. Pharaoh's daughter... out of the city of David**—Hence it is clear that Solomon's palace was not in the city of David, or on Zion, but (as we have argued in note introductory to chap. vii) on the same mountain as the temple, but at a lower elevation. Her transfer to her new abode is spoken of, like that of the ark and the tabernacle, as a *going up*. See note on chap. viii, 4. **Unto her house**—A department of his own new palace. See on chap. vii, 8. **Then did he build Millo**—That is, after he had removed his Egyptian wife to her new home, he repaired this fortress. This passage merely specifies the time of the work referred to in verse 15.

**25. Three times in a year**—At the three great feasts required by the law of Moses. Exod. xxiii, 14–16. The feast of unleavened bread, or the passover; the feast of harvest, or of weeks, (Exod. xxxiv, 22;) and the feast of ingathering, or of tabernacles. Deut. xvi, 13. Compare 2 Chron. viii, 13. **So he finished the house**—This statement seems to have no necessary connexion with the

immediate context, and appears out of place. But such is often the manner with the Hebrew writers: and yet in all such cases there was in the mind of the writer a connecting line of thought. Thus these last two verses (24 and 25) have reference to chap. iii, 1–4, and show, as Keil observes, “how Solomon, after the completion of his buildings, remedied the defects which existed in the beginning of his reign. These verses thus form the full and suitable close to the section treating of Solomon's buildings.”

**26. A navy of ships**—A fleet, of course, of less size, and ships of smaller dimensions than those with which we are familiar. The success and great importance of Phœnician navigation probably suggested this enterprise to Solomon. The Hebrews were never a seafaring people, and Solomon's sailors had to be taught by Hiram's shipmen. See next verse. **Ezion-geber**—An ancient city on the eastern arm of the Red Sea, at which the Israelites once or twice encamped during their wanderings in the desert. Num. xxxiii, 35; Deut. ii, 8. In modern times no trace of it seems to be found. **Elath**—Written, also, *Elath*. This city seems to have been more ancient and more important than Ezion-geber, since it is mentioned for the purpose of showing the locality of other places. It, also, was one of the places where Israel halted in the desert journey. Deut. ii, 8. All that now remains of it are extensive mounds of rubbish which “present nothing of interest, except as indicating that a very ancient city has here utterly perished.” —*Robinson*. **On the shore of the**

sea, in the land of Edom. **27** 'And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. **28** And they came to "Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty

*†* Chap. 10. 11. — *u* Job 22. 24.

**Red Sea**—That is, on the eastern arm of the Red Sea, which bounds the Peninsula of Sinai on the southeast. It is now commonly called the Eranitic Gulf, or Bahr Akabah. **Land of Edom**—The mountainous tract of country lying to the south of Palestine, and, as here appears, extending to the Red Sea; the possession of the children of Esau. See at Gen. xxxvi, 8.

**27. Shipmen that had knowledge of the sea**—Skilled in navigation. The Phenicians were the earliest and boldest navigators of antiquity. See the tribute to Tyrian wisdom and success in Ezek. xxviii, 1-5.

**28. Ophir**—Endless have been the conjectures as to the locality of Ophir; but there are no sufficient data to bring the question to a positive decision. India, Africa, and Arabia have each been urged with much plausibility. But the assumption made by many critics, that this navy fitted out by Solomon from Ezion-geber to bring gold from Ophir is identical with the "navy of Tarshish," (chap. x, 22,) that returned only once in three years, and that Jehoshaphat's "ships of Tarshish," built and broken at Ezion-geber, which were designed to go to Ophir for gold, (chap. xxii, 48,) and also to go to Tarshish, (2 Chron. xx, 36, 37,) necessarily involve the conclusion that Ophir and Tarshish were contiguous, or on the same route, is at best only a supposition. To us it seems most probable that Ophir was a region somewhere in Arabia. For, 1.) It must have been easily accessible from Ezion-geber. 2.) Several ancient authorities affirm that gold was formerly abundant in Arabia. 3.) The region probably took its name from Ophir, the son of Joktan, (Gen. x, 29,) and it is quite generally agreed that the Joktanites peopled Southern Arabia. Sheba, the region in Southern Arabia ruled by the celebrated queen who visited Solomon, (chap. x, 1,) probably received its name

talents, and brought it to king Solomon.

## CHAPTER X.

**A**ND when the "queen of Sheba" heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, she

*a* 2 Chron. 9. 1, &c.; Matt. 12. 42; Luke 11. 31.

from Sheba, another son of Joktan, who is mentioned Gen. x, 28, in immediate connexion with Ophir, and probably settled in a district adjoining him. So a navy that carried on a regular traffic with Ophir would be likely to spread the fame of Solomon to the neighbouring province, and at this time the queen of Sheba might have ruled the districts both of Sheba and Ophir. **Four hundred and twenty**—In 2 Chronicles viii, 18 the reading is *four hundred and fifty*, which is probably the error of some early transcriber, who mistook 2, twenty, for 3, fifty.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE QUEEN OF SHEBA, 1-13.

This account of the queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon seems to be inserted here because of its association with his commerce with Ophir. The traders at Ophir spread the fame of the great king of Israel in all that land, (see note on chap. ix, 28;) and the queen, eager to acquire wisdom, and curious to test the truth of the reports she heard, made a long journey to visit him. We see in her the laudable desire to acquire wisdom, and the custom, so common in the ancient time, of making long journeys to visit noted seats of learning, and to converse with men noted for their wisdom. Her example condemns many of this generation, who, having even better opportunities than hers, and a greater than Solomon to consult, neglect to acquire the heavenly wisdom which is more precious than rubies, and a tree of life to them that lay hold on her. Compare Matt. xii, 42.

**1. Sheba**—Not the Cushite kingdom of this name in Ethiopia, as Josephus and others hold, but the region in Southern Arabia originally settled by Sheba the son of Joktan, (Gen. x, 28,) and comprising what is now known as Yemen, or Arabia-Felix. Hence our Lord

same <sup>b</sup> to prove him with hard questions. **2** And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. **3** And Solomon told her all her <sup>a</sup> questions:

there was not *any* thing hid from the king, which he told her not. **4** And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, **5** And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the <sup>2</sup>attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his <sup>3</sup>cupbearers,

<sup>b</sup> Judges 14, 12; Prov. 1. 6.—1 Heb. *words*.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *standing*.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *butlers*.

called the queen of this region "the queen of the south," and spoke of her as coming from *the ends* (τῶν περάτων) *of the earth*, that is, the uttermost part of the land to the south. The Arabs call the name of this queen Balkis. **Concerning the name of the Lord**

—לֵשֵׁם יְהוָה, *to the name*, that is, *in relation to the name of Jehovah*. Solomon's fame was great because of its most intimate relation to, and association with, the name of Jehovah. From him had he received the gift of superior wisdom; and the distant lands that brought their sons from far, and their silver and gold to Solomon, brought them at the same time to the name of the Lord his God, because he had thus signally glorified him. Compare Isa. lx, 9. **To prove him with hard questions**—Such as riddles. A common custom among the Arabs of ancient and modern times, to test the sagacity and wisdom of distinguished persons. Josephus relates that Hiram, king of Tyre, and Solomon also, tried to puzzle each other with riddles and enigmatical sayings. "The spirit of this asking of questions and solving of dark riddles is of the very nature of the Socratic wisdom itself. 'To ask questions rightly,' says Lord Bacon, 'is the half of knowledge.' 'Life without cross-examination is no life at all,' said Socrates. And of this stimulating process, of this eager inquiry, of this cross-examining of our thoughts, bringing new meanings out of old words, Solomon is the first example. When we inquire, when we question, when we are restless in our search after truth, when we seek it from unexpected quarters, we are but following in the steps of the wise king of Judah and the wise queen of Sheba."—*Stanley*.

**2. With a very great train**—Such as corresponded with her position and

power. **Spices . . . gold . . . precious stones**—The products of her land.

**4. The house that he had built**—His royal palace, not the Lord's house, which, it would seem, she was not permitted to enter, but only saw the ascent to it by which the king went up.

**5. Meat of his table**—The vast quantity and variety of his provisions. See chap. iv, 22, 23. **The sitting of his servants**—Rather, the *seats*, or *dwellingplaces*, of his servants. The apartments in the royal palace where they kept themselves ready at any moment to obey the orders of the king. **The attendance**—Or, *the standing-places*. The serving posts or positions of duty assigned to the ministers. All of these were doubtless arranged and adorned in a splendid style. **His ministers**—מְשָׁרְתָיו, a higher order of ser-

vants than those whose sittingplaces have just been mentioned. They were attendants on the king's person, stood in his presence, and all their duties brought them more or less into immediate proximity to Solomon. **Cupbearers**—Or *butlers*; whose office it was to take charge of the royal plate, and to pour out and bring wine to the king. See note on Neh. i, 11. Some understand the word of the *drinking-vessels* which he used. **His ascent**—Not the king's gravity and pious demeanour as he went up to worship in the temple, (*Henry*.) nor the burnt offering which he offered in the house of the Lord, as the older versions and many commentators thought, but the private entrance or passage-way, magnificently wrought, by which he ascended to the temple from some part of his own house. Compare 2 Kings xvi, 18; 1 Chron. xxvi, 16. From this it appears that the palace was at a lower elevation than the temple, and proba-

O. T.

\*and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. **6** And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. **7** Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. **8** Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom. **9** Blessed be the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice. **10** And she gave the king a hundred and twenty talents

<sup>e</sup> 1 Chron. 26. 16. — <sup>4</sup> Hebrew, word. — <sup>5</sup> Or, sayings. — <sup>6</sup> Heb. thou hast added wisdom and goodness to the fame. — <sup>d</sup> Prov. 8. 34. — <sup>e</sup> Chap. 5. 7. — <sup>f</sup> 2 Sam. 8. 15; Psal. 72. 2; Prov. 8. 15.

bly on the southern slope of Moriah. See note at the beginning of chap. vii. **No more spirit in her**—She was completely overwhelmed with wonder and astonishment.

**9. Blessed be the Lord thy God**—The queen had learned much of Jehovah and of the history of Israel, and here expresses her reverence; but we have no credible evidence that she became a convert to the true worship of Jehovah. Her case in this respect was much like that of Hiram. See note on chap. v, 7.

**11. Of almug trees**—Josephus describes them as a sort of *pine*; Shaw



BRANCH OF THE SANDAL-TREE.

of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon. **11** And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir, brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and precious stones. **12** And the king made of the almug trees pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house, harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such almug trees, nor were seen unto this day. **13** And king Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked, besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

<sup>g</sup> Psal. 72. 10, 15. — <sup>h</sup> Chap. 9. 27. — <sup>7</sup> *almug trees*. 2 Chron. 2. 8; 9. 10, 11. — <sup>i</sup> 2 Chron. 9. 11. — <sup>8</sup> Or, rails. Heb. *a prop.* — <sup>k</sup> 2 Chron. 9. 10. — <sup>9</sup> Heb. according to the hand of king Solomon.

understands the *cypress* to be meant; but most moderns identify this tree with the *sandal-wood*, which was celebrated in the East from very early times as a fine-grained and fragrant tree. The reference to the **navy of Hiram**, and the mention of **Ophir**, seem to have been because the navy brought therefrom so many products similar to those which the queen of Sheba presented to him.

**12. Pillars**—Rather, a *balustrade* to fend the side of some elevated passage or stairway. 2 Chron. ix, 11 reads מַסְבֵּית, which may mean either an elevated walkingplace or a staircase. The latter meaning is here the more probable. The balustrades of the stairways in the temple and in the palace were made of this celebrated wood. **Harps . . . psalteries**—See note on 1 Sam. x, 5. **No such almug trees**—Those supplied by Hiram (2 Chron. ii, 8) were of an inferior quality. Compare note at chap. v, 8.

**13. All her desire**—Whatever of a portable nature she desired to carry home with her as mementos of Solomon's greatness and glory. **Besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty**—Or, as the margin has it, *gave her according to the hand of king Solomon*. That is, besides giving her

**14** Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, **15** Besides that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffick of the spice merchants, and <sup>1</sup>of all the kings of Arabia, and of the <sup>10</sup>governors of the country. **16** And king Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of gold went to one target. **17** And he made <sup>m</sup>three hundred shields of beaten gold; three pounds of gold went to one shield: and the king

<sup>l</sup> 2 Chron. 9. 24; Psa. 72. 10.—<sup>10</sup> Or, *captains*.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 14. 25.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 7. 2.—<sup>o</sup> 2 Chron. 9. 17, &c.

the things she asked for, he gave her presents becoming his vast wealth. As she had brought him presents of such great value, it was but a matter of kingly courtesy for him to respond by similar gifts.

#### SOLOMON'S VAST REVENUES, 14-29.

**14. Six hundred threescore and six talents of gold**—There is no settled agreement as to the value of the Hebrew talent, but at the least calculation this was not less than fifteen millions of dollars of our currency. In thus greatly multiplying gold and silver to himself Solomon transgressed the law of God. Deut. xvii, 17.

**15. Merchantmen...spice merchants**—The difference between the two is difficult to determine. The rendering *spice merchant* is unauthorized by any thing in the original word. But here, perhaps, the two words are used in the general sense of wholesale and retail traffickers. **All the kings of Arabia**—Whose provinces bordered upon the south of Palestine, and were tributary to the kingdom of Israel. Compare 2 Chron. xvii, 11 and Jer. xxv, 25, where kings of Arabia and kings of the *mingled people* are associated, and designated by the same word. **Governors**—*Prefects*; another name for the officers described at chap. iv, 7. On the origin of the word, see note on 2 Kings xviii, 34.

**16. Targets**—Large oblong shields, to cover or defend the whole body. **Six hundred shekels**—About eighteen pounds.

**17. Shields**—Ordinary shields, such

put them in the <sup>a</sup>house of the forest of Lebanon. **18** <sup>o</sup>Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold. **19** The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round <sup>11</sup>behind: and *there were* <sup>12</sup>stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. **20** And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not <sup>13</sup>the like made in any kingdom. **21** <sup>p</sup>And all king Solomon's drinking vessels

<sup>11</sup> Hebrew, *on the hinder part thereof*.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *hands*.—<sup>13</sup> Heb. *so*.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Chronicles 9. 20, &c.

as were carried on the arm. **Three pounds**—Three *mina*. 2 Chron. ix, 16 reads *three hundred shekels*; according to which these shields were half the weight of the targets or long shields described in the previous verse; that is, about nine pounds. Both the greater and smaller shields were probably made of wood and overlaid with gold, and were designed more for ornament than for use. They were hung up in one of the great halls of Solomon's palace, (see note on chap. vii, 2,) whence they were subsequently carried away by Shishak king of Egypt. Chap. xiv, 25, 26.

**18. Throne of ivory**—Like Ahab's ivory house, (chap. xxii, 39,) and the ivory palaces and beds mentioned Psa. xlv, 8, Amos vi, 4, this throne was not made entirely of ivory, but was so set with ivory, and so much of this material was used in its construction, that it naturally received this name. Ivory was an important article of ancient commerce, as Assyrian monuments show.

**19. Top of the throne was round behind**—That is, it had a curved, or rounded back. **Stays**—The arms, as those of an easy chair, on which the king, when seated, might rest his hands or arms. This throne, with all its imposing surroundings, was set in the porch described at chap. vii, 7.

**20. Twelve lions**—One lion at each end of each of the six steps by which the king ascended the throne. They were symbolic figures, and in that position might teach that resolute and determined courage and firmness should characterize all the actions of the king.

were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold; <sup>14</sup> none were of silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. **22** For the king had at sea a

14 Or, there was *no silver* in them.  
 7 Gen. 10, 4; 2 Chron. 20. 36.

**22. Once in three years came the navy of Tarshish**—This navy need not be identified with that which was built at Ezion-geber, (chap. ix, 26,) for Solomon probably had many fleets that sailed on many seas. And yet it must not be supposed that the navy of Tarshish never went to Ophir, or that ships designed to carry on commerce with Tarshish might not be built at Ezion-geber. The contrary is clearly indicated at chap. xxii, 48 and 2 Chron. xx, 36. Scholars are now quite generally agreed that Tarshish, which figures so largely in Scripture in connexion with Phenician commerce, is to be identified with Tartessus of classic history, a city and district in southwestern Spain not far from the Straits of Gibraltar. But Solomon's navy certainly would not require three years to go to Spain and back; and though gold and silver abounded in that country, it would hardly be the place to go for **ivory, apes, and peacocks**. These latter abound in India and its neighbouring isles. Hence some have been disposed to look for another Tarshish in India. But why may not the fleets of Solomon and Hiram have passed on from Spain through the Straits of Gibraltar round the Cape of Good Hope, and thus to Southern Asia? This might well have taken three years; but an enterprise of lesser magnitude could hardly have required so long a time. This supposition is rendered exceedingly plausible by the statement of Herodotus, (iv, 42,) that Necho, king of Egypt, once sent out a fleet under charge of Phenicians, who started from the Red Sea and came round through the pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar) back to Egypt again. This seems clearly to show that Africa had been circumnavigated in Herodotus's time, and Necho's putting the enterprise in charge of the Phenicians may have been because those far-famed nav-

igators had accomplished such a voyage before. In short, I can see nothing impossible or improbable in the supposition that the enterprising seamen of Tyre had already, in Solomon's time, discovered the route to India by circumnavigating Africa, and that Solomon's fleet was wont with them to make the voyage once in three years. That this line of commerce afterwards ceased, and the route became unknown, is not to be wondered at in view of the divisions and wars that prevailed immediately after Solomon's death, both in the land of Israel and also in all the neighbouring nations—wars that resulted, in the course of a few hundred years, in the total destruction of Tyre and all her glory. **Apes**—קפִּים, *kopim*, some species of the monkey tribe, still called in some parts of India *kapi*. They are represented on the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments as an article of traffic. **Peacocks**

15 Or, *elephants' teeth*.—r Chapter  
 3. 12, 13; 4. 30.

—תִּקְיִים, *tukiyim*. Some suppose the parrot and some the Guinea fowl to be meant; but several of the better versions and some eminent critics interpret the expression of the peacock, whose natural home is India. It is said by some authorities that these Hebrew words for ivory, apes, and peacocks are identical with the Tamil names by which they are known in Ceylon at the present day. "It has long since been decided that India was



MONKEYS AS TRIBUTE—FROM  
 THE ASSYRIAN MONUMENTS.

of the earth for riches and for wisdom. **24** And all the earth <sup>15</sup>sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. **25** And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. **26** And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and

with the king at Jerusalem. **27** And the king <sup>17</sup>made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore trees that are in the vale, for abundance. **28** <sup>18</sup>And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and <sup>19</sup>linen yarn: the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price. **29** And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty: <sup>20</sup>and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the kings of Syria,

<sup>15</sup> Heb. *sought the face of*.—s Chap. 4. 26; 2 Chr. 1. 14; 9. 25.—t Deut. 17. 16.—u 2 Chr. 1. 15-17.—17 Hebrew, *gave*.—v Deut. 17. 16;

2 Chron. 1. 16; 9. 28.—18 Heb. *And the going forth of the horses which was Solomon's*.—w Ezek. 27. 7.—x Josh. 1. 4; 2 Kings 7. 6.

the cradle of the peacock. It is in the countries of Southern Asia, and the vast archipelago of the Eastern Ocean, that this bird appears to have fixed its dwelling, and to live in a state of freedom. All travellers who have visited these countries make mention of these birds. Thevenot encountered great numbers of them in the province of Guzzerat; Tavernier, throughout all India; and Payrard in the neighbourhood of Calcutta. La Billardiére tells us that peacocks are common in the Island of Java."—CUVIER'S *Animal Kingdom*. Wordsworth sees a sort of irony and sarcasm in the mention of apes and peacocks as "the climax of the produce of the commerce of Solomon. Apes and peacocks to Solomon, the wise king at Jerusalem! To gratify curiosity; to amuse the people; and perhaps to while away the time of the strange women to whom Solomon clave in love instead of cleaving to the Lord." Here he sees one of the causes of Solomon's fall.

**24. All the earth**—Inquirers after wisdom, like Shoba's queen, came from far and near, wherever the fame of Solomon had spread. These expressions of universality, so common in the Hebrew writers, are not to be taken in the widest possible sense.

**27. Cedars made he to be as the sycamore**—That is, he imported so much of this valuable wood for building purposes that it lost its rarity in the eyes of the people, and became as common to sight as the sycamore trees that grew so abundantly in the lowlands and valleys.

**28. Solomon had horses brought**—More literally, *As to the bringing of the horses of Solomon out of Egypt*. In importing horses from Egypt Solomon further broke the Divine commandment. Deut. xvii, 16. **And linen yarn**—This translation of מִקְנֵה must be given up as unsupported by any sufficient reason or authority. Gesenius renders the word a troop or company: *And a company of the king's merchants brought (from Egypt) a company (of horses) at a price*. But the old versions and many critics take the word as the name of a place, *Koa*, or *Coa*, somewhere "in the neighbourhood of Egypt, where Israelite traders abode for the sake of the traffic in horses."—FÜRST. The whole verse would then read: *As to the bringing of the horses of Solomon from Egypt, and from Coa, the traders of the king received them from Coa at a price*. This, on the whole, seems to be the best explanation of this passage.

**29. Six hundred shekels of silver**—According to Keil about thirty-five pounds sterling, or one hundred and seventy-five dollars. **A hundred and fifty**—About forty-five dollars. The object of the writer was to show that horses and chariots were so multiplied in Solomon's day as to be obtained at a very small price. **And so for all the kings of the Hittites, and... of Syria**—That is, the Canaanitish and Syrian kings, who were tributary to Solomon, received the same advantage from this extensive traffic in horses and chariots that the great king himself did. They too had opportunity to purchase

did they bring *them* out <sup>10</sup>by their means.

# CHAPTER XI.

**B**UT <sup>a</sup>king Solomon loved <sup>b</sup>many strange women, <sup>1</sup>together with the

19 Heb. *by their hand*.—<sup>a</sup>Neh. 13. 26.  
<sup>b</sup>Deut. 17. 17.—1 Or, *besides*.

horses and chariots of Solomon's traders at the same low price. But this commerce with Egypt, though for a time seeming to aggrandize the empire of Solomon, was helping to lay the foundation of its fall. **By their means**—That is, by means of Solomon's horse-merchants. Literally, *by their hand they brought them forth*. The traders brought them (horses and chariots) out of Egypt for the vassal kings of Palestine and Syria.

# CHAPTER XI.

## THE SINS OF SOLOMON, 1-8.

We come now to that strange, dark period in Solomon's career—so strangely dark, and in contrast with his earlier piety and glory so deeply sad, that even the author of Chronicles passes it over in silence, and some modern critics pronounce it incredible and psychologically impossible. We find Jewish pride on the one hand, and German rationalism on the other, uniting to deny or else explain away the literal truth of the history. But there the record stands, and will stand, in unpleasant but simple naked truth, whose obvious meaning none can doubt, holding up to the world a most impressive lesson of human frailty, and showing the terrible danger to spiritual life of the vain pomp and glory of the world. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. x, 12.

In the earlier part of his reign Solomon was rich towards God, but later he multiplied to *himself* gold and silver, and horses and chariots, and wives and concubines. In seeking to surpass the magnificence and glory of the kings of the nations, he fell even lower than they all; for better are they who never knew the way of truth, than he who, having been blessed with superior light from God, turns away and runs headlong into a foul idolatry. Solomon's fall was

daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edonites, Zidonians, and Hittites; **2** Of the nations *concerning* which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, <sup>c</sup>Ye shall not go in to

c Exod. 34. 16; Deut. 7. 3, 4; Josh. 23. 12, 13; Ezra 9. 2; Mal. 2. 11.

no sudden apostasy, and doubtless many a deep and wearing heart-struggle did he pass through ere the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, finally gained over him the mastery. We infer from the warnings against transgression contained in the Divine communication of chap. ix, 6, that already the Lord saw in him tendencies that threatened danger; and we suppose that these tendencies grew stronger and stronger until they resulted in the dark and fatal apostasy which this chapter unfolds to us. Compare Neh. xiii, 26.

**1. Loved many strange women**—Chiefly princesses, (verse 3,) the daughters of the many vassal kings who were tributary to Solomon. How strange that he who in his Proverbs (ii, 16-19; v, 3-4; vii, 5-27) could give such noble counsel to avoid the strange woman, should be himself taken in her snare. **Together with the daughter of Pharaoh**—That is, besides the daughter of Pharaoh. She was the wife of his youth and of his better days; and although his marriage with her was not in harmony with the spirit of the law, (see note on chap. iii, 1,) had he remained true to her no particular harm would have resulted, for we cannot find that she ever seduced him to idolatry. But when he essayed to take other foreign wives, and especially of nations among whom the Hebrews were positively forbidden to marry, his fall was speedy and fatal. **Moabites, Ammonites**—According to the letter of the law (Exod. xxxiv, 11, 16; Deut. vii, 1, 3) only marriage with the Canaanitish nations was prohibited; but Moabites and Ammonites were forbidden to enter the congregation until the tenth generation, and the **Edomites** until the third. Deut. xxiii, 3, 8. Indeed, the spirit of the law was against intermarriage with any and all who would be likely to turn the heart after false gods.

them, neither shall they come in unto you: *for* surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. **3** And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. **4** For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his *heart* was not perfect with the LORD his God, *as*

*d* Deut. 17. 17; Neh. 13. 26.—*e* Chap. 8. 61.  
*f* Chap. 9. 4.—*g* Verse 33; Judges 2. 13;  
**2** Kings 23. 13.—*2* Molech, verse 7.

**3. Seven hundred wives**—Some have thought by a supposed corruption in the text to reduce the seven hundred to seventy, and the **three hundred concubines** to eighty, and have referred to Sol. Song vi, 8, as giving support to this conjecture. But all this proceeds from the false idea that an Oriental sovereign has intercourse with all his wives and concubines. The harem of an Eastern monarch is even at the present day looked upon as a sort of state necessity, and the king's rank and greatness is estimated according to its extent. He multiplies his wives according to his wealth and power, though many of them he never sees at all. Darius Codomannus is said to have taken three hundred and sixty concubines in his camp when he marched against Alexander. So Solomon, wishing to surpass all other kings in the fame of greatness, filled his harem with a thousand women. Among these he had his favourites, who at length turned his heart from God; but the large majority of the thousand he probably never knew personally at all.

**4. When Solomon was old**—What sight on earth more sad than the disgraceful fall of an old man, whose youth had been devout and promising and his manhood noble? Well did Solon, the Athenian, insist that no man should be counted blessed until he had nobly ended a happy, noble life. **His heart was not perfect**—But whose heart is *perfect* before God? ask many. We may here infer the latitude in which the word *perfect* is used in Scripture. He who abstained from idolatry, and was devoted to Jehovah, and walked in **all the commandments of the law, was**

*was* the heart of David his father. **5** For Solomon went after *Ashtoreth* the goddess of the Zidonians, and after *Milcom* the abomination of the Ammonites. **6** And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and *went* not fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father. **7** *Then* did Solomon build a high place for *Chemosh*, the abomination of Moab, in *the* hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination

*3* Heb. *fulfilled* *not after*, Num. 14. 24.—  
*h* Num. 33. 52.—*i* Num. 21. 29; Judges 11. 24.  
*k* 2 Kings 23. 13.

the perfect man. Herein Solomon was sadly defective, as were many of his descendants after him. David is spoken of as perfect, though he was not without sin. See more on chap. xv, 14.

**5. Went after**—This expression seems to show that Solomon was actually guilty of idolatry. Compare Deut. xi, 28; xiii, 2; xxviii, 14. Yet the exact extent to which he went into idolatry is left uncertain. He probably never so far apostatized as to forget Jehovah, and neglect the ordinary service of the temple. **Ash-toreth**—See on Judges ii, 13. **Milcom**—Called also *Molech*, (verse 7,) and *Moloch*. Amos v; 26. The fire god of the Ammonites, an abomination, particularly in that he was worshipped by the offering of human sacrifices. See on Levit. xviii, 21. Some have distinguished Milcom and Molech as two different deities, chiefly because of the difference in the names and because they seem, in 2 Kings xxiii, 10, 13, to have been worshipped at two different places, the Mount of Olives and the Valley of Hinnom. But the similarity of the names, both from the same Heb. root, (*מלכ*, *מלכ*), is a stronger argument for their identity than the slight difference is for the contrary; and the same idol may have been worshipped in two different places near Jerusalem.

**7. Chemosh**—The national god of the Moabites; worshipped also by the Ammonites, probably with abominable practices similar to those used in the worship of Molech. See on Judges xi, 24; Num. xxi, 29. **The hill that is before Jerusalem**—That is, the hill now known as the Mount of Olives. On its three most conspicuous emi-

of the children of Ammon. **8** And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

**9** And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because "his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, " which had appeared unto him twice, **10** And "had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded. **11** Wherefore the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this "is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, " I will

surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. **12** Notwithstanding, in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. **13** "Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give "one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake " which I have chosen.

**14** And the LORD "stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom.

**15** "For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain,

l Ezek. 16, 22, 29; Hos. 4, 11, 12; 1 Cor. 10, 11, 12.  
—m Vers. 2, 3.—n Chap. 3, 5; 9, 2.—o Chap.  
6, 12; 9, 6.—4 Heb. *is with thee*.—p Verse 31;

chap. 12, 15, 16.—q 2 Sam. 7, 15; Psa. 89, 33.—  
r Chap. 12, 20.—s Deut. 12, 11.—t 1 Chr. 5, 26.  
—u 2 Sam. 8, 14; 1 Chron. 18, 12, 13.

nences it is probable that the idol altars were erected, and not, as some will have it, on the southern slope, now known as the "Mount of Offence."

**8. Likewise did he for all**—He may have erected altars to other idols than the ones here named, but probably the national deities of the Zidonians, Ammonites, and Moabites were sufficient for the religions of all the strange wives; and in building altars for these three he made provision for his Edomite and Hittite wives as well as the rest. Certain it is that no mention is anywhere made of Solomon erecting altars to any other gods than these.

#### THE LORD'S ANGER AGAINST SOLOMON, 9-13.

**9. The Lord was angry**—Divine anger, as presented in the Bible, is no sudden burst of passion, no low and hateful motion of revenge, as human anger often is, and with which, perhaps, too many are ever prone to associate their idea of Divine anger. It is rather the deep, eternal antagonism of holiness to sin, of truth to error, of right to wrong. Our God cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; and how much soever he may love a human soul as such, if that soul cleaves unto sin, it must of necessity place itself along with the sin in enmity towards God, and so become obnoxious to the Divine anger. See note on Judges ii, 14. **Appeared unto him**

**twice**—At Gibeon and Jerusalem. Chaps. iii, 5 and ix, 2, where see notes.

**11. The Lord said unto Solomon**—Probably by the ministry of Ahijah the Shilonite. Verse 29. **Thy servant**—Jeroboam the son of Nebat. See verses 26-40.

**13. One tribe**—The tribe of Judah, to which David belonged, and into which the tribe of Benjamin seems to have been absorbed. Chap. xii, 21.

#### SOLOMON'S ADVERSARIES, 14-40.

Although Jehovah's love and promise to David secured to Solomon for life the unity of his vast realm, yet would he not permit the idolatrous king, who turned so vilely from the God of his father, to hold an undisturbed career till the end of life, but inflicted penal judgment upon him by raising up three adversaries, Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam, who during his later years gave him great trouble by disturbing the peace of his kingdom, and giving him sad premonition of the misfortunes that must befall his descendants.

**14. Hadad the Edomite**—Probably a grandson, or at least not a remote descendant, of the Hadad (or Hadar) of 1 Chron. i, 50. The name seems to have been common among the kings of Edom. Compare Gen. xxxvi, 35. **Of the king's seed**—A member of the royal family.

**15. When David was in Edom**—See 2 Sam. viii, 13, 14, and notes there. **To bury the slain**—The slain Israel

\*after he had smitten every male in Edom; **16** (For six months did Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every male in Edom;) **17** That Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad *being* yet a little child. **18** And they arose out of \*Midian, and came to \*Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him a house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land. **19** And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. **20** And the sister of Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes

*v* Num. 24. 19; Deut. 20. 13.—*w* Gen. 25. 2, 4; Num. 22. 4; 25. 6, 14, 18.—*x* Gen. 14. 6; 21. 21; Num. 10. 12; Deut. 1. 1; 33. 2; Hab. 3. 3.

ites who fell in the Edomite war. From 1 Chron. xviii, 12, it would seem that Abishai, Joab's brother, had chief command in the great battle that was fought in the Valley of Salt, and which resulted in the slaughter of eighteen thousand Edomites. Doubtless many an Israelite perished in this battle; and Joab, rather than Abishai, took charge of their burial.

**18. They arose out of Midian, and came to Paran**—They first fled from Edom to Midian, and then, probably supposing themselves still insecure, they arose and went toward Egypt as far as some settlement in the desert of Paran, where they seem to have stayed awhile before proceeding to Egypt. The Midian here referred to was probably the same as that to which Moses fled from Pharaoh, (Exod. ii, 15,) and lay in the Sinaitic peninsula south of Edom and around the mountains connected with Horeb. Paran was the vast wilderness north of Sinai and west of Edom, corresponding substantially with the modern desert *et Tih*. See on Gen. xxi, 21, and Num. x, 12. **Took men with them**—Probably as guides through the wilderness.

**22. Let me go in any wise**—Or, *Send me by all means away*. He was ambitious to recover the lost fortunes of his father's house, and the luxurious ease of Egyptian court-life could not detain him. The sacred history does

weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh. **21** \* And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, \* Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. **22** Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, \* Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise. **23** And God stirred him up *another* adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord \* Hadadezer king of Zobah: **24** And he gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, \* when David slew them of *Zobah*: and they went to Da-

*v* 1 Kings 2. 10, 34.—5 Heb. *Send me away*.—6 Heb. *Not*.—*z* 2 Sam. 8. 3.—*a* 2 Sam. 8. 3; 10. 8, 18.

not give us \*the sequel of Hadad's career; but Josephus, following the intimation of verse 25, and the Septuagint, or perhaps some older tradition, says that Pharaoh persuaded Hadad for a long time not to leave him; but when Solomon's popularity began to decline, he permitted him to go, and Hadad at once went to Edom and tried to incite his countrymen to revolt from the Hebrew government. Failing in this, he joined himself to Rezon, whose hostility to Solomon is recorded verses 23–25.

**23. Rezon**—What office or position under Hadadezer he held, to what particular part of his dominions he belonged, or what instigated his revolt from his lord, does not clearly appear. Possibly he belonged to that "border at the river Euphrates," which revolted from the king of Zobah while he went to assist the Ammonites. See 2 Sam. viii, 3; x, 6, and notes there.

**24. He gathered men**—Partly, perhaps, from among the fugitives that escaped the slaughter of David, and partly from disaffected portions of the kingdom. **Went to Damascus**—This was probably towards the close of David's life, when the garrisons which were put in that section had become thinned or called away, and there was nothing at Damascus to raise any considerable opposition to Rezon and his band, and so he dwelt and reigned there.

muscus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus. **25** And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, besides the mischief that Hadad *did*: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria. **26** And <sup>6</sup>Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, whose mother's name

was Zerush, a widow woman, even he <sup>c</sup>lifted up *his* hand against the king. **27** And this *was* the cause that he lifted up *his* hand against the king: <sup>d</sup>Solomon built Millo, and <sup>e</sup>repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. **28** And the man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 12, 2; 2 Chron. 13, 6.—<sup>c</sup> 2 Sam. 20, 21.

<sup>d</sup> Chap. 9, 24.—<sup>e</sup> 7 Heb. *closed*.

### 25. All the days of Solomon—

Whence it appears that he must have established himself at Damascus before, or soon after, the death of David. In what particular way he acted the part of an adversary does not appear, but perhaps it was, as Josephus states, by making occasional incursions into the land of Israel. His hostility was probably not of sufficient magnitude to cause Solomon, a man who loved peace, and was constitutionally averse to war, to raise an army or make any great effort to oppose him; but his neglect to pay tribute, and his hostile attitude toward Israel, would naturally trouble Solomon with constant apprehension of danger; and once, at least, he led or sent an expedition against Hamath-zobah, (see 2 Chron. viii, 3,) perhaps to put down an insurrection started by this same Rezon.

**Besides the mischief that Hadad**—Here there seems to be something wanting in the Hebrew text. To say, *he was an adversary besides the mischief*, etc., is, to say the least, a strange manner of expression. The Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, and Arabic versions also vary from the Hebrew. The Sep-

tuagint, reading אָדָר instead of אָדָם,

has: *This is the evil which Adar did*. And this is probably the true reading, and may still be made out of the Hebrew text by a simple changing of the Masoretic punctuation, and substituting ך for ך. The meaning then will be, This same kind of mischief (incursions in the land of Israel like those of Rezon) wrought also Hadad. He, like Rezon, became captain of a band, and excited insurrections, and ravaged remote portions of Solomon's empire. **He abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria**—If the correction above

proposed be the true reading of the original Hebrew text, then these sentences should be understood of Hadad and not of Rezon. This would confirm the account of Hadad given by Josephus, (see note on verse 22,) that failing to persuade the people of Edom to revolt from Solomon he joined himself to Rezon, and became, first, master of a company of men, and then ruler of a part of Syria. Instead of *over Syria*, the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic read *over Edom*.

### 26. Jeroboam the son of Nebat—

Here we are first introduced to that distinguished person who figures so prominently in the following history as the first king in the kingdom of Israel. **Zereda**—In Septuagint written *Sarida*, and *Sarira*; Vulgate, *Sareda*. It was somewhere in the tribe of Ephraim, but its exact locality has not been found. In the long addition to the Hebrew text which the Septuagint gives after chap. xii, 24, and which adds somewhat to the history of Jeroboam, Sarira is represented as the place in Mount Ephraim to which Jeroboam returned from Egypt; there he assembled the whole tribe (σκήπτρον) of Ephraim, and there he built a fortress. May it not be the same as Tirzah? See chap. xiv, 17. **Lifted up his hand**—A form of expression indicating sedition within the kingdom, a rebellion; rather than hostility from without, like the troubles occasioned by Rezon and Hadad.

**27. Breaches**—Reuts in the walls, made by time and storms. It was while Solomon was repairing the walls and fortifications of Jerusalem, as noticed in chap. ix, 15, (where see note,) that Jeroboam showed his superior abilities, and was promoted by the king.

**28. A mighty man of valour**—An

man that he <sup>a</sup> was industrious, he made him ruler over all the <sup>a</sup> charge of the house of Joseph. **29** And it came to pass at that time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet <sup>a</sup> Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way;

8 Heb. *did work*.—9 Heb. *burden*.

able and efficient workman. **Charge of the house of Joseph**—That is, of the levy of men from the Ephraimites who were descendants of Joseph, and sometimes thus called by their father's name. The **charge** or *burden* of this tribe here means the labour they were required to perform in building Millo and repairing the walls of the city. This tribe was of course called on for its quota of men in the levy which Solomon raised, (chap. v, 13; ix, 15,) and Jeroboam was at first among the labourers—perhaps an under officer; but at length, on account of his marked ability, was made overseer of all the workmen of his tribe.

**29. At that time**—While he had charge of the Ephraimite labourers at Jerusalem. **The prophet Ahijah**—Here we meet with another representative of that interesting order of men, divine messengers, who appear so often and so prominently during the time of the Hebrew monarchy. Ahijah seems to have been to Jeroboam very much what Samuel was to Saul, and Nathan was to David. He too, probably, announced to Solomon the word of the Lord as recorded in verses 11–13. His two genuine and authentic prophecies, each of great importance to the kingdom of Israel, are recorded here, verses 29–39, and chap. xiv, 6–16. **The Shilonite**—So called because he dwelt at Shiloh. Chap. xiv, 2, 4. It is, perhaps, significant that this prophet dwelt at Shiloh, the ancient seat, and up to the time of Samuel the centre, of the national worship. Thence the ark had been taken to its capture, “and the Philistines destroyed Shiloh with such hideous barbarity, that centuries afterwards the heart of the people shuddered at the very mention of the name. They never restored the place. Even Jeroboam, though of the tribe of Ephraim, never ventured to use, as a rival

and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two *were* alone in the field: **30** And Ahijah caught the new garment that *was* on him, and *rent* it in twelve pieces: **31** And he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for

e Chap. 14. 2.—f See 1 Sam. 15. 27; 24. 5.

to Jerusalem, a site consecrated by so many centuries of worship.”—SMITH, *Prophecy a Preparation for Christ*. Ahijah's oracles seem like a voice from that olden sacred past—the voice of the God of Joshua and of Eli—still proclaiming blessings on the obedient, and penal woes on them that forget his name. **He... clad himself**—That is, Ahijah, not Jeroboam, had clad himself. **A new garment**—Probably a mantle thrown over the shoulder, similar to that which Samuel used to wear, and which was once used in a like symbolical action, 1 Sam. xv, 27. Some interpreters see in the newness of the garment a symbol of the Hebrew monarchy, as yet young and undivided. “Here,” observes Rawlinson, “we find the first instance of that mode of delivering a divine message which became so common in later times, and which has been called ‘acted parable.’”

**30. Twelve pieces**—The numbers used in this symbolical prophecy have themselves a sacred symbolism; and yet, like all symbols, must not be supposed capable of being pressed into a relation to all possible aspects of the case to which they are made to refer. Thus “twelve” is a sacred number, (see supplementary note on Luke vi, at the end,) and the twelve pieces here represented the twelve tribes, though, counting the two sons of Joseph, there were actually thirteen. So, too, the ten pieces represented the revolting tribes, not altogether because exactly ten tribes revolted, for it is doubtful whether those on the east of the Jordan, and Simeon in the south, had much to do with the matter, but rather because “ten” is the number of totality, and indicated that substantially *all Israel* would fall away from Rehoboam, as is in fact asserted in chap. xii, 20. Then, further, the prophet does not follow out the matter as we might suppose

\* thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: **32** (But he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) **33** <sup>a</sup> Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ash-toreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that *which* is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as *did* David his father. **34** Howbeit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: **35** But 'I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will

give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes. **36** And unto his son will I give one tribe, that <sup>k</sup> David my servant may have a <sup>l</sup> light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. **37** And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. **38** And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do *that* is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that 'I will be with thee, and <sup>m</sup> build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. **39** And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever. **40** Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled into Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

<sup>a</sup> Verses 11, 13.—<sup>b</sup> Verses 5-7; chap. 6, 12, 13; 9, 5, 7; 1 Chron. 28, 9; 2 Chron. 15, 2; Jer. 2, 13; Hosea 4, 17.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. 12, 16, 17.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 15, 4; 2 Kings 8, 19; Psal. 132, 17.—<sup>l</sup> Heb. *lamp*, or, *candle*.—<sup>m</sup> Josh. 1, 5.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Sam. 7, 11, 27.

by making the two remaining pieces represent Judah and Benjamin, but says that *one tribe* should cleave to the house of David, that is, only a *single part* of the sovereignty of Israel. But besides Judah, it seems that the tribe of Benjamin, and a part of Simeon, adhered to Rehoboam. Chaps. xii, 21; xix, 3. But the symbolism was sufficiently exact for the prophetic purpose, and it made an announcement never to be forgotten.

**36. A light alway before me**—That is, a son to sit on the throne, and like a lamp or candle shine through the future ages, an evidence of the sure mercies of David, and a typical Messianic prophecy. Compare 2 Sam. vii, 16.

**37. According to all that thy soul desireth**—From this we may infer that Jeroboam already had an eye to the throne, and his soul yearned for regal power. His office of ruler of the house of Joseph (verse 28) had begotten within him lofty aspirations.

**38. Build thee a sure house**—Perpetuate thy posterity in regal powers.

**39. But not for ever**—Literally, *only not all the days*. Here breaks in another ray of promise to the house of David, whose sons, though chastened and smitten with the rod of men, (com-

pare 2 Sam. vii, 14,) were to be the human line of fathers to that Great Son, who "shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Luke i, 33. The Rabbins say: "When Messiah comes, the kingdom shall be restored to the house of David."

**40. Solomon sought . . . to kill Jeroboam**—He probably not only heard of Ahijah's prophecy, but also saw in the youthful Ephraimite an insubordinate spirit and disposition to usurp his throne. Solomon's relations to Jeroboam were strikingly similar to those of Saul to David. Solomon, like Saul, drew down upon himself by disobedience the anger of Heaven; and to him, as to Saul, the word of the Lord announced judgments that darkened all his future. Like Saul, he knew, and sought to kill, his rival. The beginning of his reign, like that of Saul's, was popular and auspicious, but its end was sad and dark. But Jeroboam, unlike David, who would not lift up his hand against the Lord's anointed, was ambitious to reign, and acted not with modesty and prudence towards his king. **Shishak**—This is the first instance in sacred history where the name of an Egyptian king is given as

**41** And <sup>a</sup>the rest of the <sup>11</sup>acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, <sup>are</sup> they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? **42** <sup>a</sup>And the <sup>12</sup>time that Solomon reigned in Jeru-

<sup>n</sup> 2 Chron. 9. 29.—<sup>11</sup> Or, *words*, or, *things*.  
<sup>o</sup> 2 Chron. 9. 30.

other than the common title Pharaoh, and it becomes therefore important in adjusting Egyptian and Hebrew chronology. The fact that he received and entertained the enemy and rival of Solomon clearly indicates that he was not the king whose daughter Solomon had married, (chap. iii, 1.) and of this it is a noticeable confirmation that in Manetho's table, where he is called *Sesonchis*, his name stands at the head of a new dynasty. On the Egyptian monuments his name is written *Sheshonk*. He was probably a usurper, who succeeded in dethroning the Pharaoh with whom Solomon had formed such a close alliance, and would therefore be no friend of Israel. See more at chap. xiv, 25–28.

CLOSE OF SOLOMON'S HISTORY, 41–43.

**41. The rest of the acts of Solomon**—So this scriptural account of Solomon is professedly not a complete history. The writer only recorded such facts as served the purpose of sacred history, and plainly states that for fuller details his readers must look elsewhere. The same thing is true respecting many other parts of the sacred writings. How strange that some professed scholars have ignored this fact, and in their criticisms have assumed that the sacred writers recorded all they knew about the case in hand! **The book of the acts of Solomon**—The authorship and extent of this book cannot now be determined. It was probably a very full history of Solomon compiled from the public annals of the kingdom, and also from the works of contemporary prophets, like Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo. See 2 Chron. ix, 29.

**43. Was buried in the city of David**—See note on chap. ii, 10. The precedent of burying David in the holy city was followed in the burial of his descendants. Compare chap. xiv, 31;

salem over all Israel *was* forty years. **43** <sup>a</sup>And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and <sup>a</sup>Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>12</sup> Hebrew, *days*.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Chron. 9. 31.  
<sup>q</sup> Matt. 1. 7, *Reboam*.

xv, 8, etc. **Rehoboam his son**—Apparently his only son. He was forty-one years old at the beginning of his reign, so he must have been born the year before Solomon's enthronement. His mother was Naamah, an Ammonitess, who probably died before Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter. Compare chap. xiv, 21. "Many a poor man," says Hall, "hath a houseful of children by one wife, whereas this great king hath only one son by many housefuls of wives."

Stanley says, "As Bacon is in English history 'the wisest, greatest, meanest of mankind,' so is Solomon in Jewish and in sacred history." His character, as drawn in the Scriptures, is surely many-sided. The simple, unpretending child; the darling of Jehovah, (2 Sam. xii, 25;) the chosen king; the seeker after wisdom, choosing her above all other things; the wise and sagacious judge; the powerful ruler and glorious sovereign, surpassing in many ways all the kings of the nations round about him; his navies traversing many a sea, and kings and princes from afar bringing and laying at his feet their gifts. But in his old age a despot, (chap. xii, 4,) a polygamist, and an idolater. These last were doubtless the immediate causes of his own decline, and of the subsequent misfortunes of the nation.

In his reign the Israelitish monarchy reached the highest pitch of worldly splendour, the memory of which is still preserved in many an Oriental legend and tradition. But that very splendour seemed to pervert the nation's heart, and cause the cloud of Jehovah's glory to depart from his people and his holy habitation. The outer splendour of his court and empire, the magnificence of his buildings, and his commerce with foreign nations, were, perhaps, not in themselves wrong. They might have been made the means of leading other

nations to the knowledge of the one true God. But they were fraught with danger. Worldly glory has ever had the tendency to take away the heart from the pure and the good rather than to win it to the worship of God. So it was with Solomon, and so it ever has been. "How hardly shall a rich man enter the kingdom of God!" The thing is not impossible with God; but the dangers of wealth and worldly splendour far surpass their probable advantages to their possessor. And so the Church, whenever she has sought to increase her strength by a showing of worldly forces, has become shorn of her spiritual power.

Viewed from the theocratic standpoint, Solomon's reign was a grand failure. It corresponded largely with the sad failure of Saul, the first king of Israel. Saul's misfortunes, however, were largely owing to his incapacity for government, as well as to moral obliquity. He was unequal to the exigencies of his age, and the task of successfully moulding into a monarchy the nation so long ruled by judges exceeded his powers. But with Solomon there was no lack of ability. His wisdom, sagacity, and power were equal to any possible emergency. But his grievous sins and neglect of God's law brought on his ruin. His greatness and glory weaned his heart from God, and his wives led him into idolatry. Speculation as to his probable repentance and final salvation is idle and fruitless, and will always be governed by preconceived opinions. The sacred writers pass it over in utter silence, and give no shadow of intimation that he ever turned from his idolatry. The assumption that he repented of his sins, and afterwards composed the Book of Ecclesiastes as a record of his sad but profound experiences, is destitute of any valid or controlling proof; and the authorship of Ecclesiastes is altogether a matter of uncertainty. A mighty shadow clouds his latter days; and there, in Holy Writ, he stands depicted; one part of his life and character in strangest contrast with the other—the grandest and saddest personage of sacred history.

## SECTION SECOND.

### HISTORY OF THE KINGS

OF ISRAEL AND JUDAH CONJOINTLY.

I. KINGS XII-XXI, AND II. KINGS I-XVII.

#### CHAPTER XII.

REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES, 1-19.

Feelings of jealous rivalry had long prevailed between the tribe of Judah and the rest of Israel. The unwise action of the tribe of Judah in making David king without the concurrent action of the other tribes (2 Sam. ii, 4, note) was perhaps still remembered, and the fierce contention between Judah and the ten tribes about bringing David back to Jerusalem, (2 Sam. xix, 41-43,) and the rebellion of Sheba that sprang from that feud, all intensified the previous bitterness. The strong governments of David and Solomon made it impossible for sedition or revolt to be successful in their day; but the old feeling of bitterness and jealousy was only slumbering, and ready at any moment of fair opportunity to burst out, and in defiance of the throne assert its power. The continual levies of men which Solomon demanded for his public works, and the burdens imposed on them, seemed to grow more oppressive as he advanced in years; and his adversaries Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam, who so greatly troubled his last days, received, probably, no small encouragement and support from the large number of disaffected Israelites among the northern tribes. So when Rehoboam succeeded to the throne the opportune moment had come for the disaffected tribes to make their demands and seek redress. It is likely, too, that Ahijah's prophecy that Jeroboam should become king of ten tribes (chap. xi, 29-39) had not been kept a secret thing, but had rather led the elders of the people to take some measures for its accomplishment.

The prominence of Ephraim, too, in this revolt, deserves particular notice. "To the house of Joseph—that is, to Ephraim and Manasseh, with its adjacent tribe of Benjamin—had belonged, down to the time of David, all the

## CHAPTER XII.

**A**ND <sup>a</sup>Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king. **2** And it came to pass, when <sup>b</sup>Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in <sup>c</sup>Egypt, heard of it, (for he was fled from the presence

a 2 Chronicles 10. 1, &c.—b Chapter 11. 26.  
c Chap. 11. 40.

chief rulers of Israel; Joshua the conqueror; Deborah, the one prophetic, Gideon, the one regal, spirit of the judges; Abimelech and Saul, the first kings; Samuel, the restorer of the state after the fall of Shiloh. It was natural that, with such an inheritance of glory, Ephraim always chafed under any rival supremacy. Even against the impartial sway of its own Joshua, or of its kindred heroes, Gideon or Jephthah, its proud spirit was always in revolt; how much more when the blessing of Joseph seemed to be altogether merged in the blessing of the rival Judah; when the Lord 'refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the Mount Zion which he loved.' *Psa. lxxviii, 67.* All these embers of disaffection, which had well nigh burst into a general conflagration in the revolt of Sheba, were still glowing; it needed but a breath to blow them into a flame."—*Stanley.*

**1. To Shechem**—A central place for the northern tribes to meet, and consecrated by many hallowed associations. Compare *Gen. xii, 6; xxxiii, 18; xxxvii, 12; Deut. xi, 29; xxvii, 12, 13; Josh. viii, 33; xx, 7; xxiv, 1-25.* **For all Israel were come . . . to make him king**—The verb *בָּאוּ*, *were come*, should

here be rendered by the pluperfect *had come*. It seems that this coming together of the ten tribes was an action preconcerted among themselves. They had their demands all ready, and their plans and purposes fixed for revolt in case the king would not yield to them. The *for* (*בְּ*) introduces the reason of

Rehoboam's going to Shechem. He went thither to receive the oath of allegiance from the representatives of the northern tribes, who had already as-

sembled there ostensibly for the purpose of acknowledging him king. **3** That they sent and called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, **4** Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father,

d 1 Sam. 8. 11-18; chap. 4. 7; 2 Chron. 10. 4, 5; Matt. 23. 4.

sembled there ostensibly for the purpose of acknowledging him king.

**2. When Jeroboam . . . heard**—Heard that Solomon was dead, and that Rehoboam had begun to reign in Jerusalem. **For he was fled**—The parenthesis which begins here should take in, according to Schmidt, De Wette, and others, the first sentences in the next verse, but this is unnecessary. The whole passage, (verses 2 and 3,) however, should be translated thus: *When Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard, (now he was still in Egypt, whither he had fled from the face of Solomon the king, and Jeroboam was dwelling in Egypt,) then sent they and called him, and they came, Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel, and spake to Rehoboam, saying.* They had heard of Ahijah's prophecy that Jeroboam should become their king, and they knew his ability and influence, and desired his counsel and guidance in this critical period of their history. All this indicates a deeply-laid plan and a well-matured purpose to throw off the yoke of the house of David.

**4. Thy father made our yoke grievous**—Some have doubted whether Solomon really oppressed the people with severe exactions, and have thought that these complaints were only a pretence to cover their purpose of rebellion. But the probability is, that these complaints had some foundation. The people who once clamoured for a king that they might be like the nations round them, now began to realize the truth of Samuel's prediction as to the cost of maintaining a king and a court. *1 Sam. viii, 11-18.* The vast levies of men raised by Solomon to build the temple, and the palace, and the fortifications of Jerusalem and other cities, (*chap. ix, 15,*) must have severely taxed the people, and this grievous yoke

and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. **5** And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. **6** And king Rehoboam consulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he yet lived, and said, How do ye advise that I may answer this people? **7** And they spake unto him, saying, 'If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. **8** But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him: **9** And he said unto them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy father did put upon us lighter? **10** And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou spake

unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, 'My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's loins. **11** And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. **12** So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. **13** And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him; **14** And spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father *also* chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions. **15** Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying, which the Lord <sup>k</sup>spake by Ahijah

<sup>e</sup> 2 Chron. 10. 7; Prov. 15. 1. — <sup>f</sup> 2 Chron. 10. 8; Eccles. 10. 2, 3. — <sup>g</sup> 2 Chron. 10. 10, 11; Prov. 10. 14; 18. 6, 7.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *hardly*. — <sup>h</sup> Prov. 13. 20. — <sup>i</sup> Verse 24; Judges 14. 4; 2 Chron. 10. 15; 22. 7; 25. 20. — <sup>k</sup> Chap. 11. 11, 31.

quite likely grew heavier with Solomon's advance in years. **And we will serve thee**—Was this promise made in good faith? Doubtless their purpose of revolt was fixed in case Rehoboam refused to accede to their demands; but had he agreed to make their burdens lighter, there is reason to believe they would have remained in allegiance to the house of David.

**5. People departed**—Retired from Rehoboam's presence, not to return home, but to tarry at Shechem **three days** to await the king's decision.

**7. Be a servant unto this people this day**—The ruler that would hold the affections of his people must first learn to be their servant. He must consult their wishes and interests so as not to seem unmindful of his most humble subject. But it is easy to see, as Bähr remarks, that such a proposition might not be very agreeable to a rash and imperious young king, in whose veins Ammonite blood flowed.

**8. The young men that were grown up with him**—Probably sons of Solomon's chief officers, who had been trained at the royal court, and

were designed to be the officers of the succeeding king. Though called יְלָדִים, *youths*, they may have been, like Rehoboam, forty or more years old.

**10. My little finger... thicker than my father's loins**—A proverbial expression equivalent to, My power is greater than my father's, and my exactions shall come upon you accordingly.

**11. Whips... scorpions**—As the scorpion—an instrument of torture with many lashes, like the legs of the animal of this name, and each lash armed with sharp points to lacerate the flesh—is a more terrible scourge than the common whip, so will my severity exceed my father's.

**15. The cause was from the Lord**—Better, *for it was a change from Jehovah*. סִבָּה—Septuagint, μεταστροφή—*a change or turn* in the course of events. The meaning is, this great change or revolution in the Hebrew state was brought about in the providence of God as a judgment on the nation for the sins of Solomon. He decreed it, and foretold it by the prophet Ahijah. Chap. xi, 30–33. But neither Solomon's

the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat. **16** So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, <sup>1</sup>What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David. So Israel departed unto their tents. **17** But <sup>m</sup>as for the children of Israel which dwell in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam reigned over them. **18** Then king Rehoboam <sup>n</sup>sent Adoram, who *was* over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam

<sup>l</sup>2 Sam. 20. 1.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 11. 13, 36.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 4. 6; 5. 14.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *strengthened himself*.

sins nor Rehoboam's blind folly and rash imprudence were from the Lord. For them their human authors were solely responsible. But He, whose omniscience takes in all future events as foreseen certainties, (not as decreed necessities,) may well, in respect to events affected by human agency, determine and decree his own future judgments or mercies according to what he foresees men will freely do. So, too, in infinite holiness his determinate counsel and foreknowledge even delivers up Jesus of Nazareth to death, but this decree influences not causatively the action of those wicked hands that crucify and slay him. See Acts ii, 23, and note there.

**16. What portion have we**—The signal cry of insurrection and revolt. Compare 2 Sam. xx, 1. **Departed unto their tents**—Went to their different homes, and proceeded to make arrangements for founding a kingdom separate from Judah.

**17. Children of Israel. . . cities of Judah**—Israelites not belonging to the house of Judah, but dwelling within the territory of that tribe.

**18. Rehoboam sent Adoram**—This officer, called also *Adoniram*, (see note on chap. iv, 6,) had accompanied the king to Shechem, and now was sent out, perhaps with instructions from Rehoboam to assure the seditious populace that the duties of his office should not be executed oppressively. But it was then too late to appease the indignant throng, and even the king was obliged to fly.

VOL. IV.—8

<sup>a</sup>made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem. **19** So <sup>o</sup>Israel <sup>a</sup>rebelled against the house of David unto this day.

**20** And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah <sup>p</sup>only. **21** And when <sup>q</sup>Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, a hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which

<sup>o</sup>2 Kings 17. 21.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *fell away*.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 11. 13, 32.—<sup>q</sup> 2 Chron. 11. 1.

JEROBOAM IS MADE KING OF ISRAEL; REHOBOAM VAINLY ATTEMPTS TO SUBDUCE THE REBELLION, 20-24.

**20. All Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again**—The representatives of the people, when they were about to assemble at Shechem to demand of Rehoboam a lightening of their burdens, had sent and called Jeroboam from Egypt, and he was at the head of the assembly at Shechem when they made their demands; (compare verses 2, 3, 12;) but it was not till after the congregation at Shechem was broken up, and the people had departed to their tents, (verse 16,) that *all Israel*, in the wider sense, (that is, the masses who went not to Shechem but were only represented there by their elders or delegates,) heard of Jeroboam's return. **Sent and called him unto the congregation**—The congregation that had assembled to anoint him king. Here we have an instance of the rapidity with which the sacred writer passes over the minor details of his history. The call for this assembly—the time, and place, and manner, of its coming together—and the ceremonies of the election and crowning of their new king, are all passed over in silence. **Judah only**—Though Benjamin seems to have adhered to Rehoboam, (verse 21,) and also many Israelites of other tribes that dwell in the cities of Judah, (verse 17,) yet they are all looked upon thenceforth as absorbed in the tribe of Judah. See on chap. xix, 3.

**21. With the tribe of Benjamin**—

O. T.

were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. **22** But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, **33** Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, **24** Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of

Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart, according to the word of the Lord.

**25** Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Peniel. **26** And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: **27** If this peo-

*r* 2 Chron. 11. 2.—*s* Verse 15.

*t* See Judges 9. 45.—*u* Judges 8. 17.

It was natural that this tribe, lying as it did upon the border of Judah, and having Jerusalem, the royal city of David, even within its own territory, should adhere to the southern kingdom.

**22. Shemaiah**—With this man of God we here meet for the first time, and though our knowledge of him is limited to a few scattered notices, we see in them how vast a moral power the prophets of this age wielded over the king and the nation. They and the converts of their ministry were the salt that preserved the nation through many a long year of idolatrous rebellion. Shemaiah seems to have been, during Rehoboam's reign, pre-eminently the prophet of Judah. His word on this occasion, though doubtless much against the royal will, awed the king into submission. Again, in the time of Shishak's invasion, he appeared, and his ministry was instrumental in averting the possible consequences of that invasion—the destruction of Jerusalem. 2 Chron. xii, 5–7. He also composed a history of Rehoboam's reign. Chap. xii, 15.

**23. The remnant of the people**—Those Israelites not of the tribes of Judah or Benjamin who were dwelling within their cities. Verse 17.

**24. Returned to depart**—They turned from their attempt to go and fight Jeroboam, and went or returned to their homes. The reading in 2 Chron. xi, 4, is, *They returned from going against Jeroboam.*

JEROBOAM'S WORKS AND IDOLATRY,  
25–33.

**25. Built Shechem**—Enlarged and fortified it for a royal residence. **Dwelt therein**—Not exclusively, for

in chap. xiv, 17, we find him dwelling at Tirzah. **Went out from thence**—That is, Shechem was the base of operations in the building and fortifying of other cities. **Peniel**—The place east of the Jordan, near the fords of the Jabbok, where Jacob wrestled with the angel. (Gen. xxxii, 30.) and whose tower and inhabitants, in the time of the judges, Gideon had destroyed. Judges viii, 17. Jeroboam probably regarded it as an important position, commanding the great caravan road to the farther East, and accordingly fortified it for the security of his kingdom.

**26. Jeroboam said in his heart**—He earnestly soliloquized. The expression implies deep thought, and profound, far-sighted consideration. He not only thoroughly considered the subject within himself, but he also took counsel with his most intimate and interested advisers. He did not wish nor design to introduce heathenish idolatry into his kingdom, but he was apprehensive that if all his people went up to Jerusalem to worship their hearts would soon revolt from him, and turn to the government of Rehoboam. So the making of new sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan, the institution of the calf-worship, and the establishment of a new priesthood, were undertaken, not with the design of countenancing idolatry, but professedly as modifications and reforms in the true worship of God demanded by the changed circumstances of the kingdom. They were dictated by a shrewd state-policy; not by the word of God. They were probably presented to the people as improvements on the temple worship, for it was not to be expected that a people so long accustomed to the worship of the in-

ple "go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* unto Rehoboam king of

Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. **28** Whereupon the king took counsel, and "made two calves of gold, and said

v Deut. 12. 5. 6.

visible Jehovah, though they might have felt ever so bitter towards the government at Jerusalem, would consent to any semblance of idol-worship unless it were presented with a plausible show of argument. And doubtless the proposed reforms, when first presented to the people, lacked no show of reason. It was urged that it was too much for all the people to go to Jerusalem, (verse 28,) and that the division of the old kingdom, which was of the Lord, (verses 15, 24,) required some corresponding changes in the place and modes of Divine worship. Jeroboam might have maintained, with a skill worthy of the ratiocination of modern German Neology, that there was nothing in the place itself that need lead them to worship solely at Jerusalem, for Shiloh, Nob, and Gibeon had been sanctuaries before it was chosen; that the changing of the priesthood from one set of persons to another had a sufficient precedent in Solomon's deposition of Abiathar, (chap. ii, 27;) and that the setting up of the golden calves was not in itself wrong, but had the sanction of the blessed Aaron's example, who set up one at Sinai, and taught the people to look upon it, not as an idol, but as a symbol of the Lord that brought them out of Egypt. Exod. xxxii, 4, 5. But just here was Jeroboam's sin—a one-sided construction and use of the facts of sacred history, and an arrogant assumption to improve the religious worship of the nation by most dangerous methods, that had no proper sanction from Jehovah or his prophets. He may be regarded as a type of the Romish Hierarchy, which, in its efforts to bind the people to St. Peter's chair, has verily set up graven images in connexion with its worship, and assuming to represent the sanctities of a holy antiquity, has, in fact, reproduced the forms of heathen idolatry. "The sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat," says Stanley, "is the sin again and again re-

w 2 Kings 10. 29; 17. 16.

peated in the policy (half-worldly, half-religious) which has prevailed through large tracts of ecclesiastical history. Many are the forms of worship in the Christian Church, which, with high pretensions, have been nothing else but 'so many various and opposite ways of breaking the second commandment.' Many a time has the end been held to justify the means, and the Divine character been degraded by the pretence, or even the sincere intention, of upholding his cause; for the sake of secular aggrandizement; for the sake of binding together good systems, which, it was feared, would otherwise fall to pieces; for the sake of supporting the faith of the multitude from the fear lest they should fall away to rival sects, or lest the enemy should come and take away their place and nation. False arguments have been used in support of religious truth, false miracles promulgated or tolerated, false readings in the sacred text defended. And so the faith of mankind has been undermined by the very means intended to preserve it."

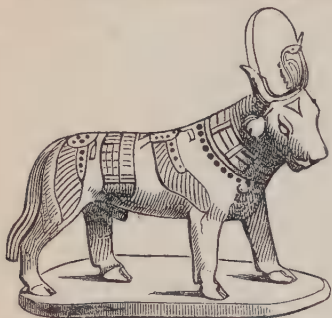
**28. Took counsel**—But not of God. Compare Isa. xxx, 1. **Two calves of gold**—Jeroboam's residence in Egypt had made him familiar with the calf-worship so largely practised there, and this, doubtless, had much to do with the erection of these golden shrines; besides, the people had already become accustomed to the sight of the figures of oxen in their religious ceremonial by their presence as supporters of the molten sea at the temple of Jerusalem. And as it had now become needful to provide some substitute for the ark and its cherubim, it was natural to adopt the semblance of an animal with whose presence they were already familiarized. These calves were not set up to be worshipped as idols, any more than were the ark and other sacred shrines at Jerusalem, but were designed to be symbols of Jehovah. They

unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: \* behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. **29** And he set the one

in <sup>7</sup> Beth-el, and the other put he in <sup>2</sup> Dan. **30** And this thing became <sup>a</sup> a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. **31** And he made

Exod. 32. 4, 8.—y Gen. 28. 19; Hosea 4. 15.

z Judges 18. 29.—a Chap. 13. 34; 2 Kings 17. 21.



APIS, THE SACRED BULL.

were made, like the golden calf at Sinai, of wood or other material overlaid with gold, and probably resembled the Egyptian *Mne*, or *Mnevis*, which was worshipped at On, or the bull *Apis*, whose form was similar. **It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem**—An appeal to the fleshly love of ease. He has nothing against the worship at Jerusalem; that is all right for those that dwell there; but he assumes to show his people an easier and better way. There have never been wanting those who are very ready to take the easiest apparent road to heaven, nor have there been wanting ministers to point it out. **Behold thy gods**—Rather, *Behold thy God*. He would no more establish polytheism than would Aaron. He quotes the very words of Aaron, (see Exodus xxxii, 4,) as if to say, This is no new religion, no new system of worship; but was used of old by our fathers under the sanction of Aaron.

**29. Beth-el... Dan**—Since one of the objects he professed to seek was the convenience of the people, two places of worship would of course be better than one—Beth-el in the southern and Dan in the northern part of the kingdom. Perhaps, also, here was a still closer imitation of the Egyptian calf-worship, in that the two calves

might resemble, the one *Apis*, who was worshipped at Memphis, and the other *Mne*, who was worshipped at On. There was reason, and policy too, in fixing on Beth-el and Dan. The one was consecrated in the traditions of the people as the place where God appeared to Jacob, and that patriarch had himself called it the *house of God*. Genesis xxviii, 11–22. There, too, the people had formerly been wont to go up to worship God. 1 Sam. x, 3. And at Dan the teraphim of Micah had been set up, and a religious service established in connexion with it in the days of the judges. Judges xviii, 30.

**30. This thing became a sin**—It was not designed to be idolatry, but it speedily ran into it. How could it result otherwise, for it was a direct violation of the second commandment, and a likening of the glory of the invisible God to an ox that eateth grass? **Jeroboam** must have known the hazards of his course; but his case is only one example out of many which show how the natural heart of man will turn away from those parts of God's word which conflict with his self-interests and desires. He probably, as we have indicated above, (note on verse 26,) quieted his conscience by explaining away and distorting the obvious lessons of sacred history. **For the people**—Rather, *and the people went before the one, unto Dan*. The meaning is obscure, and perhaps some words have fallen out of the text. Keil takes *the one* to mean the calf at Beth-el, and understands that the people even unto Dan, that is, the greater part of the people, went to the sanctuary at Beth-el. Others take *the one* in the sense of *one of the two*, and explain: The people throughout the whole kingdom, even unto Dan, resorted to one or the other of these shrines, the one, of course, which was most convenient. In this sense, *unto Dan* would be a shortened form of the common expression *from Beersheba unto Dan*,

<sup>a</sup> house of high places, <sup>c</sup> and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. **32** And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto <sup>d</sup> the feast that is in Judah, and he <sup>e</sup> offered upon the altar. So did he in Beth-el, <sup>f</sup> sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: <sup>g</sup> and he placed in Beth-el

the priests of the high places which he had made. **33** So he <sup>h</sup> offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the month which he had <sup>i</sup> devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, <sup>j</sup> and <sup>k</sup> burnt incense.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 13. 32.—<sup>c</sup> Num. 3. 10; chap. 13. 33; 2 Kings 17. 32; 2 Chron. 11. 14, 15; Ezek. 44. 7, 8.  
<sup>d</sup> Le v. 23. 33, 34; Num. 28. 12; Chap. 8. 2, 5.  
<sup>e</sup> 4 Or, *went up to the altar*, &c.

<sup>h</sup> Or, *to sacrifice*.—<sup>i</sup> Amos 7. 13.—<sup>j</sup> 6 Or, *went up to the altar*, &c.—<sup>k</sup> Numbers 15. 39.  
<sup>l</sup> 7 Hebrew, *to burn incense*.—<sup>m</sup> Chapter 13. 1.

Beersheba not being named, because, perhaps, of its adherence to the tribe of Judah. Chap. xix, 3.

**31. House of high places**—That is, a house at the two high places just mentioned—Beth-el and Dan. At each of these high places he built houses suitable to the worship that was to be established at them. So the houses of high places (chap. xiii, 32; 2 Kings xvii, 29, 32; xxiii, 19) are the temples for worship built at the high places. **Made priests of the lowest of the people**—Rather, *from the whole of the people*; that is, the entire mass of the population without reference to tribes. The priesthood had hitherto been hereditary, and confined to the tribe of Levi; but Jeroboam annulled this Divine arrangement, probably because the Levites refused to give their sanction to the new forms of worship, and thus obliged him to do this or have no priests at all.

**מִקְצוֹת הָעָם**, literally, *from the ends of the people*, never has reference to the moral character or social position of the people, but to their numerical or territorial extent. The sin of Jeroboam in this was not that he selected for priests persons of low birth or infamous character, but persons taken indiscriminately from the entire population. **Not of the sons of Levi**—These probably opposed the king's new devices and unauthorized innovations; and when he proceeded to make priests from the whole people, they "left their possessions," and with "such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to Jerusalem," and by their piety and numbers they greatly "strengthened the kingdom of Judah." See 2 Chron. xi, 13-17.

### 32. A feast in the eighth month—

Solomon fixed upon the feast of tabernacles in the seventh month (chapter viii, 2) for the dedication of the temple, and Jeroboam selects the same feast for the dedication of his house at the high place in Beth-el, but he ordains that it be held a month later there than it was in Judah. "A plausible occasion for this arbitrary deviation from the law, which repeatedly names the seventh month as the time appointed of the Lord, (Levit. xxiii, 34, 39, 41,) might be found in the circumstance that in the northern districts of his kingdom the grain ripened at least a month later than in the southern Judah, and this festival was to be kept at the ingathering of the fruit of the land."—*Keil*.

**The fifteenth day**—"He adhered to the day of the month," says the same writer, "on account of the weak, who might take offence at the innovations."

**The feast that is in Judah**—The feast of tabernacles, that continued to be celebrated in Judah according to the law.

**He offered upon the altar**—This need not be pressed to mean that Jeroboam himself offered the sacrifices at Beth-el, any more than chap. viii, 63, 64, to show that Solomon did the same. The ministry of the priests is to be supposed in either case. But with Jeroboam, who had already gone so far as to ordain priests contrary to the law, it were no strange thing to even sacrilegiously perform with his own hand the sacred duties of the priesthood, and chap. xiii, 1, 4, seem quite clearly to indicate that he did at least burn the incense himself.

**So he did in Beth-el**—The frequent mention of Beth-el in this passage shows that it was regarded as the more important of the two high places.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**A**ND, behold, there <sup>a</sup>came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: <sup>b</sup>and Jeroboam stood by the altar <sup>c</sup>to burn incense. **2** And he cried against the altar in the

*a* 2 Kings 23. 17.—*b* Chap. 12. 32, 33.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE MYSTERIOUS PROPHET OF JUDAH,  
1-34.

In this chapter two remarkable prophets are depicted, but their names are nowhere given. Both had probably been trained in the schools of the prophets, (see note on 1 Sam. x, 5,) and may be taken as representatives of others of like character and standing. One, dwelling at Beth-el, in the very face of Jeroboam's idolatry, is a dumb oracle, silent and at ease in the presence of a glaring evil; the other comes from his distant home in Judah, and solemnly proclaims his message from the Lord, but is corrupted and ruined by the very man whose neglected work he seems to have in part performed. Very naturally have many expositors supposed that the action of the old prophet of Beth-el, in seeking to mislead the man of God from Judah, sprung from feelings of jealousy. And several things in the action of the prophet of Judah remind us of Balaam, whom greed for the rewards of Balak deprived of an honourable end. Usually the true prophets among the chosen people stand out in holy character, far removed from every phase of lying or corrupting vices; but, true to all the facts of human nature and experience, the sacred writer here draws aside the veil, and shows us that the prophets, notwithstanding their sacred calling and inspiration, were human still, and men of like passions with ourselves. "It was manifestly wrong," says Theodoret, "for one who had heard the Divine voice to give credence to a human voice contradicting; he should have persisted in carrying out the very commandment that had been enjoined upon him. And I am of opinion," he adds, "that his speedy punishment served to confirm his prediction against the altar:

word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, <sup>c</sup>Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and

1 Or, *to offer*.—*c* 2 Kings 23. 15, 16.

for it was not possible to conceal or forget the history of such a man. It would tend to inspire all who heard it with a holy fear. For if the simple partaking of food contrary to the Divine command, and that not from desire on his part, but from being deceived by another, brought down such sudden vengeance on a righteous man, with what punishments shall they be visited who forsake God and worship senseless idols?"

**1 A man of God**—A truly accredited prophet, but his name is unknown. Josephus calls him *Jadon*, Epiphanius *Joas*, and Tertullian *Sameas*; but these names, together with the supposition that he was identical with Iddo the seer, or Shemaiah, have grown out of mere conjecture. **By the word of the Lord**—Or, *in the word of the Lord*. The word of the Lord was the spiritual element in which he went upon his mission. **To burn incense**—This seems to show that Jeroboam performed with his own hand the holy service of the priests. See note on chap. xii, 32 and verse 4.

**2. Josiah by name**—This precise description of a future event, and naming of the chief person, is, of course, with the rationalists, ample proof that the whole thing was written after the events had occurred. But all their reasoning proceeds from the gratuitous assumption that such predictions could never have thus occurred, and that all such records of the supernatural are mythical or legendary. The devout believer sees in this accurate portrayal of a future event only one instance out of many in the chain of Old Testament history and revelation. Isaac, (Gen. xvii, 19,) Solomon, (1 Chron. xxii, 9,) and Cyrus, (Isa. xlv, 1,) were also named before their birth. For the literal fulfilment of this prophecy, see 2 Kings xxiii, 15-20.

men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. **3** And he gave <sup>a</sup>a sign the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the Lord hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that *are* upon it shall be poured out. **4** And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him. **5** The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, <sup>c</sup>according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord. **6** And the king answered and said unto the man of God, <sup>d</sup>Entreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought <sup>e</sup>the Lord, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as *it was* before.

<sup>d</sup> Isa. 7. 14; John 2. 18; 1 Cor. 1. 22.—<sup>e</sup> Ver. 3; Num. 16. 23, 35; Deut. 18. 22; Mark 16. 20.—<sup>f</sup> Exod. 8. 8; 9. 28; 10. 17; Num. 21. 7; Acts 8. 24; James 5. 16.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *the face of the LORD*.

**3. He gave a sign**—He wrought a miracle as the evidence of his Divine authority—the credentials of his being Jehovah's ambassador. "Without this sign, the prophecy of an event that did not take place for three hundred and fifty years would have wanted authority with those who knew not the utterer."—*Kittó*.

**4. Put forth his hand from the altar**—This seems to show that he was at the time actually performing priestly functions. Compare above verse 1 and chap. xii. 32. **His hand...dried up**—Here was another miracle, wrought, not by the agency of the prophet, but by God himself. It confuses, and for the time terrifies, the king, but produces in him no reformation.

**6. Entreat now the face of the Lord**—More literally, *Stroke the face*. Caress; entreat so imploringly that you cannot be refused. The king's alarm and momentary terror was like that of the sorcerer Simon. Acts viii. 24.

**7. Come home with me**—He tempts him with three things: royal hospitality, refreshment, and reward. How much these offers influenced the future action of the prophet can only be imperfectly conjectured.

**7** And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and <sup>g</sup>I will give thee a reward. **8** And the man of God said unto the king, <sup>h</sup>If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: **9** For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, <sup>i</sup>Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. **10** So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el. **11** Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and his <sup>j</sup>sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. **12** And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. **13** And he said unto his sons, <sup>k</sup>Saddle me the ass.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Sam. 9. 7; 2 Kings 5. 15.—<sup>h</sup> So Num. 22. 18; 24. 13.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. 5. 11; Eph. 5. 11; 2 John 10. 11; Rev. 18. 4.—<sup>j</sup> Heb. *son*.—<sup>k</sup> Verse 27; Num. 22. 21; Judges 5. 10; 10. 4; 2 Sam. 19. 26.

**8. Half thine house**—Compare the similar declaration of Balaam, Num. xxii. 18; xxiv. 13.

**9. Eat no bread...nor turn again by the same way**—He must have no fellowship or communion with their works of darkness, not so much as even to eat and drink with them. Then he must also "deliver his message, as it were, *in transitu*—as he passes along. He shall not seem to be sent on purpose, but as if he only called by the way, his spirit being stirred, like Paul's at Athens, as he passed and saw their devotions. God would, by this command, try his prophet, as he did Ezekiel, whether he would not be rebellious like that rebellious house." Ezek. ii. 8.—*Henry*.

**11. An old prophet**—An old man who in his youth had probably been trained up in the schools of the prophets, and thence derived the title of prophet. It is usually supposed, and with reason, that he had fallen from his integrity, and had become corrupt and worldly. **His sons came and told him**—He did not himself go forth to witness the abominations of the king's calf-worship, but he allowed his sons to go.

So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, **14** And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak; and he said unto him, *Art thou the man of God that comest from Judah?* And he said, *I am.* **15** Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread. **16** And he said, 'I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place: **17** For 'it was said to me<sup>m</sup> by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread

nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest. **18** He said unto him, *I am a prophet also as thou art;* and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. *"But he lied unto him.* **19** So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. **20** And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:

*l* Vers. 8, 9.—4 Heb. *a word was.*—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 20. 35; 1 Thess. 4. 15.—*n* Isa. 9. 15; Jeremiah 5.

12, 31; 23. 14; Ezek. 13. 9; Matt. 7. 15; Rom. 16. 18; 2 Cor. 11. 3, 13; 2 Pet. 2. 1; 1 John 4. 1.

**14. Went after the man of God**—What was his object? Some have surmised that it was merely to show him becoming hospitality. But he must have learned from his sons that the man was forbidden to accept the hospitality of any one. More probable is the opinion that he was moved with jealousy and chagrin that a prophet should come from a distance to reprove the king's idolatry, while he himself had uttered no word of disapproval; and to this may be added Kitto's supposition, "That his single but guileful object was to lay his king under an essential obligation, by making the man of God contradict himself in a matter which he alleged to be most binding and urgent upon him, and of thus reducing the moral weight and authority of the message he had delivered." But he adds, "We entirely acquit him of intending to involve the man of God in the disastrous consequences which ensued." It is nowise impossible that still other impulses also moved him, for his soul at such a time might well have been the seat of excited and conflicting feelings. And while his first emotions were probably those of jealousy and shame, he may also have felt a burning desire to meet and talk with some true prophet, in hope that such intercourse might raise him from his present spiritual poverty and indifference. It was this very conflict of opposing impulses that makes his character so strangely mysterious. **Sitting under an oak**—Rather, *the oak*; some tree well known from its association with this or some other memorable incident. There was nothing

necessarily wrong in his thus resting under the tree; but some find here the beginning of his fall. This stay delayed his journey, and enabled the tempter to overtake him; and while sitting under the oak the thought of Jeroboam's promised rewards may have inclined him, Balaam-like, to yearn for the wages of unrighteousness.

**18. I am a prophet also**—"The door of his heart seems to have been standing ajar, almost half-opened already, to the invitations of the old man. Otherwise surely he would have said: Thou a prophet! How is it, then, that thou dwellest at Beth-el, the house of Jeroboam's corrupt worship? If thou hadst been indeed a prophet of the Lord thou wouldst have denounced that worship, and I should not have been sent from Judah to lift up my voice against it."—*Wordsworth.* **He lied unto him**—Whatever may have been the conflicting emotions and controlling motives of the old prophet of Beth-el, his impious falsehood shows how fallen and depraved was his spiritual state.

**20. The word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back**—So God may often speak through a wicked prophet. So he did through Balaam, uttering the sublimest oracles of blessing, though that soothsayer would fain have cursed Israel. He made even the dumb ass speak with man's voice, and rebuke the madness of the prophet. The attempt of Dr. Kenicott, to make the latter part of this verse mean *the prophet whom he had brought back*, is uncalled for, and precluded by the unmistakable meaning

**21** And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee, **22** But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the <sup>o</sup> place, of the which *the* LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers. **23** And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, *to wit*, for the prophet whom he had brought back. **24** And when he was gone, <sup>p</sup> a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass. **25** And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass: and they came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt. **26** And when the prophet that brought him back from

the way heard *thereof*, he said, It *is* the <sup>q</sup> man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath <sup>e</sup> torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him. **27** And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled *him*. **28** And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass: the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor <sup>e</sup> torn the ass. **29** And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. **30** And he laid his carcass in his own grave; and they mourned over him, *saying*, <sup>r</sup> Alas, my brother! **31** And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God *is* buried; <sup>s</sup> lay my bones beside his bones: **32** <sup>t</sup> For the saying

<sup>o</sup> Verse 9.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 20. 36; 2 Kings 2. 24; Amos 5. 19; 1 Pet. 4. 17.—<sup>q</sup> Psa. 119. 120; Prov. 11. 31; Heb. 12. 28, 29; 1 Pet. 4. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Hebrew, *broken*.—<sup>6</sup> Hebrew, *broken*.—<sup>r</sup> Jer. 22. 18.—<sup>s</sup> 2 Kings 23. 17, 18.—<sup>t</sup> Verse 2; 2 Kings 23. 16, 19.

of the same words in verse 26. On the faulty translation of the words in verse 23 see note there.

**22. Thy carcass shall not come—**Thou shalt perish by a violent death on thy return, and thy body shall not be buried with thy kindred. Thou shalt not reach home alive or dead. "We read of no accusation or reply on the part of the seduced prophet, nor any excuse on the part of his seducer. The matter was too solemn for bandying words; and both understood where the real pinch of the matter lay."—*Kitto*.

**23. To wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back—**Here is a mistake of our translators. לִפְנֵי is not

in apposition with הוּא, but is rather used in the sense of a genitive of possession. The verse should be translated thus: *He* (the man of God from Judah) *saddled for himself the ass of the prophet who had brought him back*. It seems that the man of God from Judah had no beast at all, but had pursued all his journey thus far on foot. Now, however, a fearful sense of coming judgment comes over his spirit, and, unhindered,

he takes the ass belonging to the old prophet who had been instrumental in his ruin, and sets out to meet his fate.

**27. Saddle me the ass—**Another ass, belonging probably to the sons of the old prophet.

**28. The lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass—**Herein was signally manifest the punitive hand of God. The ass is choice food for a lion, and man he attacks not when he has other prey. He also is wont to tear and mangle his prey. But in this case the lion, seeming to know that he had a signal mission, acted contrary to the instincts of his nature, and stopped when his work was done. These facts, attested by sufficient witnesses, (compare verse 25,) made the solemn lessons of the prophet's disobedience and death all the more impressive.

**30. Alas, my brother—**His mourning doubtless came from the depths of his heart. The mere facts of the intercourse of these two prophets are profoundly impressive. The old prophet of Beth-el could not but think that he had been instrumental in his brother's fall.

**31. My bones beside his bones—**

which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of <sup>u</sup>Samaria, shall surely come to pass. **33** <sup>v</sup>After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but <sup>w</sup>made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he <sup>x</sup>consecrated him, and he became one of the priests of the high places. **34** <sup>y</sup>And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even <sup>z</sup>to

cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

**A**T that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick. **2** And Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee to Shiloh: behold, there is Abijah the prophet, which told me that <sup>a</sup>*I should be king over this people*. **3** <sup>b</sup>And take

<sup>u</sup> See chapter 16. 24.—<sup>v</sup> Chapter 12. 31, 32; 2 Chronicles 11. 15; 13. 9.—<sup>w</sup> Hebrew, *returned and made*.

<sup>8</sup> Heb. *filled his hand*, Judges 17. 12.—<sup>w</sup> Chap. 13. 30.—<sup>x</sup> Chap. 14. 10.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 11. 31.—<sup>b</sup> See 1 Sam. 9. 7, 8.

The old prophet perceived that when his fallen brother's words came to be fulfilled, the bones of the neighbouring tombs would probably be used to burn upon the altar, and so he took this way to secure his own bones from desecration. Compare 2 Kings xxiii, 18.

**32. And against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria**—This passage is probably an interpolation, taken from 2 Kings xxiii, 19, for Samaria was not built till the time of Omri, (chapter xvi, 24.) and from that capital city the surrounding country took its name. Omri named his capital after the owner of the hill on which he built the city, from which it appears that only the hill, and not the surrounding province, bore up to that time the name Samaria, or *Shomeron*. Hence it would have been a singular anachronism for a person of Jeroboam's time to speak of the *cities of Samaria*. It is possible, indeed, that a prophet divinely illuminated might have been enabled thus to speak of things that were not as though they were, but the peculiar manner of his doing it here is unlike any other instance of revelation on record. **Shall surely come to pass**—By this positive word of the old prophet, as well as by all the memorable circumstances of his brother-prophet's disobedience and death, Jehovah's oracles against the altar at Beth-el received additional weight and fearfulness.

**33. Made again**—See note on chap. xii, 31. **Whosoever would**—The mere desire of the one who offered himself for the priesthood was the sufficient call to the holy service.

**34. This thing became sin**—פָּדַחַר, in this text, is probably an error of some early transcriber, and should be הִדַּחַר, as in chap. xii, 30. This sacrilegious impiety became the standing and crying sin of Jeroboam's family, and led to its utter destruction.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### AHIJAH'S SECOND PROPHECY, 1-18

The mysterious prophet of Judah has just pronounced against the altar of Bethel the coming judgments of Jehovah, and now, behold, another prophet at Shiloh proclaims the miserable end of the house of Jeroboam. Mark how prominent becomes the antagonism between the prophet and the king.

**1. At that time**—While Jeroboam was engaged in his impious sacrilege and idolatry. **Abijah**—Probably the king's oldest son, and heir-apparent to the crown.

**2. Disguise thyself**—He would not have it known in Israel that his queen went on such an errand. It would show that neither his calves nor his self-made priests could help him in the time of trouble. His heart had become so infatuated and clouded by his false worship as to imagine that Jehovah's prophet might not detect his guile. He dared not meet the old prophet, but sent his wife, for a sense of his own sins admonished him that he deserved condemnation, and would receive it if he went in person to Abijah. **The prophet which told me that I should be king**—He now remembered, when his son seemed about to die, that the proph-

<sup>1</sup>with thee ten loaves, and <sup>2</sup>cracknels, and a <sup>3</sup>cruse of honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of the child. **4** And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, <sup>c</sup>and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see; for his eyes <sup>d</sup>were set by reason of his age. **5** And <sup>e</sup>the Lord said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he is sick: thus and thus shalt thou say unto her; for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another woman. **¶** And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with <sup>f</sup>heavy tidings. **7** Go, tell

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *in thine hand*.—<sup>2</sup> Or, *cakes*.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *bottle*.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 11. 29.—<sup>d</sup> Heb. *stood for his hoariness*.—<sup>e</sup> Psa. 139. 1, 4; Prov. 21. 30; Amos 3. 7; Acts 10. 19, 20.—<sup>f</sup> Heb. *hard*.—<sup>e</sup> See 2 Sam. 12. 7, 8; chap. 16. 2.

et had spoken of his having a *sure house* like David, (compare chap. xi, 38,) and he fondly clung to that hope, though he had failed in meeting its conditions.

**3. Cracknels**—נֶקְדִּים, seems to denote a small sprinkled or punctured cake, baked hard for the purpose of keeping well during a long journey. Such small hard-baked biscuit are still used by the common people in the East. Compare Josh. ix, 5, where the word is erroneously rendered *mouldy*. The bread, the cracknels, and the honey were to be used as honorary presents for the prophet, according to the customs of the times. See note on 1 Sam. ix. 7. **What shall become of the child**—Henry well calls attention to the "notion of fatality" evinced in this inquiry of Jeroboam, and also in that of Ahaziah, (2 Kings i, 2,) and that of Benhadad. 2 Kings viii, 8. They inquire simply what the end will be, not what means they should use for recovery.

**4. Ahijah could not see**—"Upon the outer world, made foul by man's abominations, he has closed his eyes, and sees and lives by the light that shines within."—*Kittó*. And vainly will Jeroboam or his wife attempt, in the presence of such a divinely-illuminated seer to practice guile.

Jeroboam, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, <sup>g</sup>Forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people, and made thee prince over my people Israel, **8** And <sup>h</sup>rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee: and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, <sup>i</sup>who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do *that* only *which was* right in mine eyes; **9** But hast done evil above all that were before thee: <sup>j</sup>for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger, and <sup>k</sup>hast cast me behind thy back: **10** Therefore, behold, <sup>l</sup>I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and <sup>m</sup>will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, <sup>n</sup>and him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the

<sup>f</sup> Chap. 11. 31.—<sup>g</sup> Chap. 11. 33, 38; 15. 5.—<sup>h</sup> Chap. 12. 28; 2 Chron. 11. 15.—<sup>i</sup> Neh. 9. 26; Psa. 50. 17; Ezek. 23. 35.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 15. 29.—<sup>l</sup> Chap. 21. 21; 2 Kings 9. 8.—<sup>m</sup> Deut. 32. 36; 2 Kings 14. 26.

**9. Cast me behind thy back**—An expression the exact opposite of having God before one's eyes, and denoting in the strongest manner the utter rejection of the counsels of Jehovah. Compare Ezek. xxiii, 35.

**10. Him that pisseth against the wall**—The vilest and most insignificant domestic in his household. See note on 1 Sam. xxv, 22. **Him that is shut up and left in Israel**—According to some these words designate *the bond and the free* in Israel; according to others, *the married and the single*. The words עֶצֶר וְעֹבֵר, mean literally,

*shut up and loosed*, and may refer to such cases of confinement and freedom as are indicated by the translations above given. The slave is shut up to service, the husband to the cares of a household; and *loosed* may be the opposite of either of these thoughts. But it is better, both here and elsewhere, where the phrase occurs, (Deut. xxxii, 36; chap. xxi, 21; 2 Kings xiv, 26,) to take *shut up and left* in the wider sense of *the prisoner and the one not yet taken*, the *fettered* and the *free*. The idea is that of a people besieged by a conquering force; some are captured and shut up in prison, others are not yet taken, but one destiny awaits both—to be cut off. The expression is hyperbolic,

remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone. **11** "Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat: for the Lord hath spoken it. **12** Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house: and when thy feet enter into the city, the child shall die. **13** And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave, because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. **14** "Moreover the Lord

shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now. **15** For the Lord shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land, which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond the river, because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger. **16** And he shall give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin. **17** And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came to Tirzah: and when she came to the

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 16. 4; 21. 24.—<sup>c</sup> Ver. 17.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Chron. 12. 12; 19. 3.—<sup>q</sup> Chap. 15. 27-29.—<sup>r</sup> 2 Kings 17. 6; Psal. 52. 5.—<sup>s</sup> Josh. 23. 15, 16.—<sup>t</sup> 2 Kings

15. 29.—<sup>u</sup> Exod. 34. 13; Deut. 12. 3, 4.—<sup>v</sup> Chap. 12. 30; 13. 34; 15. 30, 34; 16. 2.—<sup>w</sup> Chap. 16. 6, 8, 15, 23; Cant. 6. 4.—<sup>x</sup> Verse 12.

but in keeping with Oriental forms of speech. **The remnant**—If after the fierce destructions just named there should yet be a remnant of this wicked house that had escaped thus far, even that remnant shall be most vilely taken off. Observe how the prophet associates no dignity with any portion of Jeroboam's doomed house. He sees in it only the vile slave or the slaughtered victim of Divine judgment, whether already a prisoner or still fighting to keep free from the hands of the foe, or, lastly, the lone few that may have escaped death during the siege.

**11. Dogs eat... fowls of the air eat**—The horrible punishment threatened in the law to the impious transgressor, (Deut. xxviii, 26,) and the foulest indignity that a conquered and slaughtered foe could be exposed to. Compare marginal reference and 1 Sam. xvii, 46. "Dogs are the chief scavengers of Oriental cities. Troops of dogs, more than half wild, scour the streets by night, clearing away all the offal and carrion that they can find. The vulture in the country districts, assisted sometimes by kites and crows, does the work of the dog in towns."—*Rawlinson*.

**12. When thy feet enter**—"Her first impulse must have been to fly home to receive his dying kiss; but her second to linger, as if to protract that dear life which must close the moment she entered the city."—*Kittó*.

**13. Some good thing**—His young heart had not yet become corrupted by his father's crimes.

**14. The Lord shall raise him up a king**—This king was Baasha, and we read the fulfilment of this prophecy in chap. xv, 27-30. **That day: but what? even now**—Why speak of that day when Baasha shall cut off the house of Jeroboam? Even now, in the death of this innocent and pious son, the cutting off of all his hopes begins.

**15. Smite Israel... root up Israel... scatter them beyond the river**

—Here is the first positive announcement of the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles as a punishment of Israel's sins. Already, in earlier times, had a rooting up and scattering of the people been threatened in case of disobedience, (Deut. xxviii, 63; xxix, 27; Josh. xxiii, 16,) but Ahijah is the first of that long line of prophets that hold up exile beyond the river Euphrates as a certainly coming woe. **Groves**—Thus our version, after the Septuagint and Vulgate, renders אֲשֵׁרָה. Other

versions render it, *a wooden pillar* or *a tree*. The word, however, is the proper name of a heathen goddess, *Asherah*. Compare Judges iii, 7; and chapter xviii, 19. It is another form for *Ash-toreth*, the goddess of the Zidonians. Asherah was their female, as Baal was their male divinity. In the plural, as here, and often elsewhere, it seems to be used in the more general sense or idols, or images of false gods, and may well be rendered simply *idols*; that is, the image-pillars of Asherah.

**17. Tirzah**—This was the royal res-

threshold of the door, the child died; **18** And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, <sup>g</sup>according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet.

**19** And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he <sup>g</sup>warred, and how he reigned, behold, they *are* written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel. **20** And the days which Jeroboam reigned *were* two and twenty years: and he <sup>e</sup>slept with his fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

<sup>g</sup> Verse 13.—<sup>z</sup> 2 Chron. 13. 2. &c.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *lay down*.—<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 12. 13.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 11. 36.  
—<sup>c</sup> Verse 31.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. 12. 1.

idence of the kings of Israel until Omri built Samaria and made it the capital of the northern kingdom. Possibly it was Jeroboam's birthplace, and identical with Zereda of chap. xi, 26. It was the residence of a Canaanitish king who was conquered by Joshua. See Josh. xii, 24. It is identified by Dr. Robinson with the modern *Tulluzah*, about five miles north of Shechem. The modern town "is of some size, and tolerably well built. We saw no remains of antiquity, except a few sepulchral excavations and some cisterns. The place lies in a slightly and commanding position; though the change of royal residence to the still more beautiful and not distant Samaria would be very natural."—*Robinson*.

CLOSE OF JEROBOAM'S REIGN, 19, 20.

**19. How he warred**—With Rehoboam (verse 30, and chap. xv, 6) and Abijam, (chap. xv, 7,) and perhaps with others. **Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel**—Literally, *book of the words of the kings of Israel*. This book was doubtless the public official state papers containing all the annals of the kings as prepared and kept by the scribe and recorder. See notes on 2 Sam. viii, 16, 17, and Introduction.

**20. Nadab**—See at chap. xv, 25.

REHOBAM'S EVIL REIGN, AND SHISHAK'S INVASION, 21–31.

**21. Rehoboam**—On the beginning of his reign, his unwise policy, and his loss of most of his father's kingdom,

**21** And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. <sup>a</sup>Rehoboam *was* forty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city <sup>b</sup>which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. <sup>c</sup>And his mother's name *was* Naamah an Ammonitess. **22** <sup>d</sup>And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they <sup>e</sup>provoked him to jealousy with their *sins* which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done. **23** For they also built them <sup>f</sup>high places, and <sup>g</sup>images, <sup>h</sup>and groves, on every high

<sup>e</sup> Deut. 32. 21; Psa. 78. 58; 1 Cor. 10. 23.—<sup>f</sup> Deut. 12. 2; Ezek. 16. 24, 25.—<sup>g</sup> Or, *standing images*, or, *statues*.—<sup>h</sup> 2 Kings 17. 9, 10.

see chap. xii, 1–24. The various acts and incidents of this king's reign are given more fully in 2 Chron. xi, xii. **Forty and one years old**—This number, confirmed by 2 Chron. xii, 13, should be followed, rather than conjectures formed from the fact that Rehoboam's companions are called *young men*, (יְלָדִים,) chap. xii, 8, and from the statements of the Septuagint in its addition to chap. xii, 24. Since Solomon reigned forty years, (chap. xi. 42,) Rehoboam was born one year before his father's accession. **Naamah**—Schultz supposes that his mother's name is here mentioned because she was the occasion of Rehoboam's idolatry; and Keil thinks it is because she had, as queen-mother, considerable influence in the government. But the single fact that she was of foreign birth—an **Ammonitess**—would be a sufficient reason for mentioning her in this connexion, though she may have been dead before Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter. See note on chap. xi, 43.

**22. Provoked him to jealousy**—This expression, of frequent occurrence, (see marginal reference,) is a metaphor which views the relation of God and his people as the marriage covenant, in which the people are represented as a faithless wife.

**23. High places**—Altars on hill-tops. See note on chap. iii, 2. **Images**—Monumental pillars or statues erected to the honor of false gods. **Groves**

hill, and <sup>h</sup>under every green tree. **24** <sup>i</sup>And there were also sodomites in the land: *and* they did according to all the abominations of the nations, which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel. **25** <sup>k</sup>And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: **26** <sup>i</sup>And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all: and he took away

all the shields of gold <sup>m</sup>which Solomon had made. **27** And king Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields, and committed *them* unto the hands of the chief of the <sup>g</sup>guard, which kept the door of the king's house. **28** And it was *so*, when the king went into the house of the Lord, that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the guard-chamber. **29** <sup>n</sup>Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, *are they* not written in the book of the Chronicles

<sup>h</sup> Isa. 57. 5.—<sup>i</sup> Deut. 23. 17; chap. 15. 12; 22. 46; 2 Kings 23. 7.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 11. 40; 2 Chron.

12. 2.—<sup>l</sup> 2 Chron. 12. 9-11.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 10. 17.—<sup>n</sup> 8 Heb. *runners*.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Chron. 12. 15.

—Rather, wooden *idols*, erected to the honour of Ashtoreth. See note on verse 15. A prominent height and a shady grove were the places desired by idolaters.

**24. Sodomites**—The *consecrated ones*; that is, persons (male prostitutes) consecrated to the practice of lewdness as a religious rite. The English word implies that this was the abominable crime against nature from which the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah have derived their lasting infamy. This abominable consecration to unnatural lust was practised among many of the ancient nations, and even, as appears from this verse, infected the chosen people. **In the land**—Guilty before God must have been those Israelites who would tolerate sodomy among them. It is not said that any of the Israelites themselves practised sodomy, though, perhaps, this was in some instances the case; but the nation that tolerated such abominations, even in the heathen dwelling in their land, was virtually a partaker of their sins.

**25. Shishak**—See note on chapter xi, 40. **Came up against Jerusalem**—This notice of Shishak's invasion is very brief, and records only his going to Jerusalem and taking away the treasures of the temple and the palace. 2 Chron. xii, 2-10 more fully describes the invasion, tells the number and nationality of his forces, informs us that he took certain fortified cities of Judah, and that when he came to Jerusalem the king and princes of Israel, at the word of the prophet Jeremiah, humbled themselves before God, and were thus by the hand of God delivered from utter de-

struction. Rehoboam seems to have submitted to the Egyptian invader without a struggle, and to have delivered over his treasures and become tributary to Egypt on condition that the besieging forces should retire from before Jerusalem. A record of this expedition, and thus a confirmation of the Scripture history, is found written in hieroglyphics upon the wall of the great temple of Karnak. There, in a long list of captured cities and provinces which Shishak claims to have added to his dominions, occur the names Gibeon, Beth-horon, Aijalon, and *Yudeh-malk*, which Champollion, Wilkinson, and others read *kingdom of Judah*, but Brugsch regards it as the name of a town in Palestine.

**26. He took away the treasures**—The splendour of Solomon's buildings, and the immense treasures which he had amassed, were doubtless spoken of far and wide, and to obtain these treasures was probably the main object of Shishak's expedition. He may have been prompted by Jeroboam to this action, for Jeroboam had dwelt <sup>at</sup> his court, (chap. xi, 40,) and was on friendly terms with him, and would gladly see him afflict the kingdom of Judah.

**27. Brazen shields**—"An expressive emblem of the degeneracy of Judah. How soon the mention of the profusion of gold in the age of Solomon is succeeded by this mention of brass in its place! 'How is the gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed!'" — *Wordsworth*.

**29. Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah**—This was in the kingdom of Judah what the book mentioned

of the kings of Judah? **30** And there was <sup>o</sup> war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all *their* days. **31** <sup>p</sup> And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David. <sup>q</sup> And his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess. And <sup>r</sup> Abijam his son reigned in his stead.

## CHAPTER XV.

**N**OW <sup>a</sup> in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. **2** Three years reigned he in Jerusalem. <sup>b</sup> And

<sup>o</sup> Chap. 12, 24; 15, 6; 2 Chr. 12, 15.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Chr. 12, 16.—<sup>q</sup> Verse 21.—<sup>r</sup> 2 Chr. 12, 16, *Abijah*; Matt. 1, 7, *Abia*.—<sup>a</sup> 2 Chr. 13, 1, 2.—<sup>b</sup> 2 Chr. 11, 20-22.—<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. 13, 2, *Michaiah*, the

in verse 19 was in the kingdom of Israel, namely, the roll of state papers prepared and kept by the king's recorder, and containing the annals of the kings. 2 Chron. xii, 15, informs us that the acts of Rehoboam were also written by Shemaiah and Iddo. See Introduction.

**30. War between Rehoboam and Jeroboam**—Not merely a feeling of hostility, but frequent wars. We are not to suppose that the word of the Lord by Shemaiah, forbidding Judah to war with Israel, (chap. xii, 24,) was any more observed in the later history of Rehoboam than it was by his sons.

**31. Abijam**—Called *Abijah* in the Chronicles.

## CHAPTER XV.

ABIJAM'S REIGN, 1-9.

**2. Three years**—As Abijam began to reign in the eighteenth and his son in the twentieth year of Jeroboam, (compare verses 1 and 9,) his reign must have been less than three full years. But it was common with the Hebrews thus to speak of periods of time; as when Jesus is said to have been in the grave three days, though in fact it was but one whole day and part of two others. **Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom**—She was the favourite wife of Rehoboam, and he took special care to make her son his successor. 2 Chron. xi, 21, 22. According to Josephus, she was the daughter of Absalom by Tamar, that is, a granddaughter

his mother's name was <sup>c</sup> Maachah, the daughter of <sup>d</sup> Abishalom. **3** And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; and <sup>e</sup> his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father. **4** Nevertheless <sup>f</sup> for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a <sup>g</sup> lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: **5** Because David <sup>h</sup> did *that which was* right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any *thing* that he commanded him all the days of his life,

*daughter of Uriel*.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. 11, 21, *Absalom*.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 11, 4; Psa. 119, 80.—<sup>f</sup> Chap. 11, 32, 36; 2 Chron. 21, 7.—<sup>g</sup> 1 Or, *candle*, chap. 11, 36.—<sup>h</sup> Chap. 14, 8.

of Absalom through his daughter Tamar, (2 Sam. xiv, 27,) who probably married Uriel of Gibeah. See 2 Chron. xiii, 2.

**3. In all the sins of his father**—The writer of Chronicles makes no mention of Abijah's sins, though he dwells on other facts of his history in far greater detail than the writer of Kings. **Not perfect**—See note at chap. xi, 4.

**4. A lamp in Jerusalem**—A light sacredly preserved in the person of the successive kings of Jerusalem to attract the gaze of men, and shine out a constant evidence of the promise to David, and a standing prophecy of the coming Messiah, the light of the world. See note on chap. xi, 36.

**5. Save only in the matter of Uriah**—This was David's great, crying offence, which drew down on him the judgments of God, and is ever mentioned to his shame. But he was guilty of other sins—as the neglect to properly discipline his sons, the primal cause of Absalom's and Adonijah's ruin; his falsehoods before Achish, (1 Sam. xxvii, 10;) and his sin in numbering Israel. 2 Sam. xxiv, 10. But all these are, in comparison with his guilt in adultery with Bathsheba, and in the murder of Uriah, as sins of infirmity and ignorance. "This great, presumptuous sin," says Bishop Sanderson, "standeth up as a pillar or monument erected to his perpetual shame in that particular, for all succeeding generations to take warning and example by."

<sup>a</sup> save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. ■ 'And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7 <sup>k</sup> Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam. 8 <sup>l</sup> And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David; and Asa his son reigned in his stead.

9 And in the twentieth year of Jero-

<sup>h</sup> 2 Sam. 11. 4, 15; 12. 9.—<sup>i</sup> Chap. 14. 30.—<sup>k</sup> 2 Chron. 13. 2, 3, 22.—<sup>l</sup> 2 Chron. 14. 1.—<sup>2</sup> That

**6. War between Rehoboam and Jeroboam**—This statement, repeated from chap. xiv, 30, is thought by some to be an interpolation here; others think, instead of *Rehoboam* we should read *Abijam*; but in that case the like statement in the next verse would be superfluous. The repetition is only in keeping with other similar repetitions common in Old Testament writers, and in connexion with the next verse is equivalent to saying that the wars and hostility of Rehoboam against Jeroboam were continued by his son Abijam.

**7. The rest of the acts of Abijam**—We have, in 2 Chron. xiii, a detailed account of his successful war with Jeroboam. There, too, we learn that the prophet Iddo chronicled his acts, and his book contained, perhaps, things not recorded in the public annals.

ASA'S REIGN, 9-24.

**10. His mother's name was Maachah**—She was his father's mother, (see on verse 2,) and therefore, properly speaking, his *grandmother*, as the margin rightly explains. The word מַאֲכָה, *ma'achah*, like בֶּן, *son*, and בַּת, *daughter*, is capable of such indefinite usage. Asa's grandmother is mentioned here because of her prominent position as queen-mother, (compare verse 13,) and as such she probably exercised the regal functions during the earlier years of his reign, while he was yet too young.

**11. Asa did that which was right**—Literally, *Asa did the right*. It is a relief amid these records of regal crimes

boam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah. 10 And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his <sup>2</sup> mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom. 11 <sup>m</sup> And Asa did *that which was* right in the eyes of the Lord, as *did* David his father. 12 <sup>n</sup> And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. 13 And <sup>o</sup> Asa his mother, even her he removed from *being* queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa

is, *grandmother's*, verse 2.—<sup>m</sup> 2 Chron. 14. 2.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 14. 24; 22. 46.—<sup>o</sup> 2 Chron. 15. 16.

and follies to find at times the record of a righteous sovereign.

**12. Sodomites**—See note on chap. xiv, 24.

**13. Queen**—"There can be no *queen-consort* where there is more than one wife; and, in the East, where there is no more than one, she is not a *queen*, she is simply the *zan-i-shah*, 'the king's wife'—that is all. There is, however, in most cases, some one in the harem who, on one account or another, is recognised as the chief lady. There was one whose claim to be chief lady, or *queen*, was superior to all others, and that was the *MOTHER* of the king. The prevalent usage of the East assigns the first rank in every household not to the wife of the master, but to his mother, to whom the wife merely becomes another daughter. And so the rank of 'the king's mother' was the nearest approach to the rank and dignity of a non-regnant queen."—*Kitto*. A close analogy is supposed to be in the *Sultana Walide*, in the Ottoman empire. **She had made an idol in a grove**—Rather, *she made a horrible statue to Asherah*. On *Asherah*, see note at chap. xiv, 15. The word מַכְלָצָה, here rendered *idol*, means *something horrible* or *terrible*. Fürst, after some of the Rabbins, regards it as the name of a *Phallus-statue*, erected to the goddess Asherah, and a symbol of the procreative power of nature. Whatever its form and its symbolism, it was an idol set up in honour of a licentious goddess and a foul system of worship, and, therefore, a horrible thing for a mother in

<sup>a</sup>destroyed her idol, and <sup>b</sup>burnt it by the brook Kidron. **14** <sup>c</sup>But the high places were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days. **15** And <sup>d</sup>he brought in the things which his father had dedicated, and the things which himself had dedicated, into the house of the Lord, silver, and gold, and vessels. **16** And

<sup>8</sup> Heb. cut off.—*p* So Exod. 32. 20.—*q* Chap. 22. 43; 2 Chron. 15. 17, 18.—*r* See verse 3.

Israel to make. **Burnt it**—As Moses did the golden calf. Exod. xxxii. 20. So this idol of Maachah, like the calf at Sinai, was probably made of wood, and covered over with gold. **Kidron**—which runs through the deep valley beneath the walls of Jerusalem on the east. See note on 2 Sam. xv. 23.

**14. But the high places were not removed**--That is, the high places, like those of chap. iii. 2, where Jehovah, and not idols, was worshipped. According to 2 Chron. xiv. 3, he took away the altars of the *strange gods*, and the high places of the same; but the temple worship had probably fallen into such disrepute during the reigns of Rehoboam and Abijah that large numbers of the people resorted to the practice so common before the temple was built, (see chap. iii. 2,) of sacrificing on high places. And this had now become so prevalent a practice that Asa could not effectually stop it. **Nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect**—That is, he followed the commandments of God with his whole heart, and in that respect was like David, chap. xiv. 8. The standard of perfection by which we are to measure the *perfect ones* of the Old Testament history is not the fullness of spiritual light and religious attainment which is set before us in the New Testament, but rather a singleness and earnestness of pious purpose to obey God and maintain the honour of his name. **All his days**—His earnest purpose to maintain the true worship of God doubtless continued all his days; but he was angry with the prophet, who reproved him for seeking help of the king of Syria rather than of Jehovah, and imprisoned him; and in his disease he sought aid of the physicians instead of the Lord. 2 Chron. xvi. 10, 12.

VOL. IV.—9

there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. **17** And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, and built <sup>a</sup>Ramah, <sup>b</sup>that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. **18** Then Asa took all the silver and the gold *that were left in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the*

<sup>8</sup> 1 Chr. 26. 26, 28.—4 Heb. *holy*.—<sup>t</sup> 2 Chr. 16. 1, &c.—<sup>u</sup> Josh. 18. 25.—<sup>v</sup> Chap. 12. 27.

**15. The things which his father had dedicated**—Probably the spoils of gold and silver which he captured in the war with Jeroboam, described 2 Chron. xiii. **Things which himself had dedicated**—Spoils taken in his war with the Ethiopians. See 2 Chron. xiv. 9–15. He thus in part repaired the losses which his kingdom had suffered by the invasion of Shishak. Chap. xiv. 26.

**16. War between Asa and Baasha . . . all their days**—Though there were intervals of rest and comparative peace, like those mentioned 2 Chron. xiv. 1, xv. 19, the feeling of hostility was such that, together with the open conflicts that occasionally took place, it might well be spoken of as continual war. How Baasha came to be king of Israel is related in verses 27 and 28.

**17. Built Ramah**—That is, he attempted to fortify it so as to make it a fortress for his troops; and since Ramah lay midway between Beth-el and Jerusalem, it was a choice spot to serve his purpose of checking the emigration of Israelites into the kingdom of Judah. **Not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa**—The conviction that Jerusalem was the proper place to worship drew multitudes there, and Jeroboam and his successors found that the calf-worship at Beth-el and Dan would not command the respect of all his people. Compare chap. xii. 27; 2 Chron. xi. 13–17; Tobit i. 6. Baasha thought to check this going up to Jerusalem by force of arms. He would build a stronghold at Ramah and station forces there to oppose all emigration out of his realm.

**18. Then Asa took all the silver**—Alas! that he who so recently dedicated these spoils to the Lord (verse 15) should make such use of them as is

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king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to <sup>w</sup> Benhadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at <sup>x</sup> Damascus, saying, **19** *There is a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may <sup>a</sup> depart from me.* **20** So Benhadad hearkened unto king

<sup>w</sup> 2 Chronicles 16. 2.—<sup>a</sup> Chapter 11. 23, 24.  
5 Heb. *go up*.—<sup>v</sup> 2 Kings 15. 23.

here described! **Benhadad**—Three kings of this name reigned in Damascus. The name seems to have been a royal title, like the Egyptian *Pharaoh*. **Son of Tabrimon**—Of whom nothing more is known. **Hezion**—He was probably the same as *Rezon*, the contemporary and adversary of Solomon. Chap. xi, 23.

**19. A league**—A covenant or treaty of peace, binding the two kingdoms to preserve friendly relations and intercourse. Of this treaty we have elsewhere no account. David had subdued Damascus and put garrisons therein; (2 Sam. viii, 5, 6;) and the city seems to have been tributary to the throne of David until Rezon established himself there. He was hostile to Israel all the days of Solomon, (chap. xi, 25;) but it seems from this verse that Asa's father had made some treaty of peace with the king of Damascus, and that a similar league had been formed between Baasha and Ben-hadad. **A present of silver and gold**—These presents of gold and silver were probably more effectual in influencing Benhadad's action than any persuasions on the part of Asa's ambassadors.

**20. Ijon**—"At the base of the mountains of Naphtali, a few miles north west of the city of Dan, is a fertile and beautiful plain called *Merj Ayun*, (the Arabic word *Ayun*, though different in meaning, is radically identical with the Hebrew *אֵינַן*,) and near its northern end is a large mound, called *Tell Dibbin*. The writer visited it some years ago, and found there the traces of a strong and ancient city. This, in all probability, is the site of the long lost

Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and smote <sup>y</sup> Ijon, and <sup>z</sup> Dan, and <sup>a</sup> Abelmethmaachah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. **21** And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, that he left off building of Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah. **22** <sup>b</sup> Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none was <sup>c</sup> exempted: and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had

<sup>z</sup> Judges 18. 29.—<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam. 20. 14.—<sup>b</sup> 2 Chron. 16. 6.—<sup>c</sup> 6 Heb. *free*.

Ijon."—*J. L. Porter*. The spot was visited in 1852 by Robinson, who regarded it as the site of the ancient Ijon, and described it as "a noble site for a city, overlooking, as it does, the whole plain of the Merj, and commanding one of the great roads between the seacoast and the interior. Unmistakable traces likewise show that in very ancient times the place was occupied by a city." **Dan**—See on Judges xviii, 29. Here Jeroboam had erected one of his golden calves. Chap. xii, 29. **Abelmethmaachah**—See on 2 Sam. xx, 14. **All Chinneroth**—This was probably a district lying in the territory of Naphtali, and adjoining the sea of Galilee, which was anciently called the sea of Cinneroth. See at Num. xxxiv, 11; Josh. xii, 3. It may have taken its name either from the sea or from some city. See on Josh. xi, 2.

**21. He left off building of Ramah**—So Asa's policy had its desired effect, and Baasha feared to have war on so many sides, and be hemmed in by hostile powers. **Tirzah**—See note on chap. xiv, 17. Baasha seems to have thought his wisest policy was at present to accept the situation, and quietly retire to his royal city, and provoke not further the wrath of the neighbouring kingdoms.

**22. Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah**—Rather, *summoned*, or *called together*, all Judah. He called out all the able men of his kingdom to take away the building material which Baasha had collected at Barnah, and with those stones he fortified Geba and Mizpah. On **Geba**, see 1 Sam. xiii, 3; and on **Mizpah**, see 1 Sam. vii, 5.

builded; and king Asa built with them \*Geba of Benjamin, and \*Mizpah. **23** The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless \*in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. **24** And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and \*Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

**25** And Nadab the son of Jeroboam \*began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned over Israel two years. **26** And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in <sup>h</sup>his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

*c Josh. 21. 17.—d Josh. 18. 26.—e 2 Chron. 16. 12.—f 2 Chron. 17. 1.—g Matt. 1. 8, Josaphat.—h Heb. reigned.*

**27** And Baasha, the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him; and Baasha smote him at \*Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. **28** Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead. **29** And it came to pass, when he reigned, *that* he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according unto <sup>1</sup>the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite: **30** <sup>m</sup>Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger. **31** Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he

*h Chap. 12. 30; 14. 16.—i Chap. 14. 14.—k Josh. 19. 44; 21. 23: chap. 16. 15.—l Chap. 14. 10, 14.—m Chap. 14. 9, 16.*

**23 Cities which he built**—See 2 Chron. xiv, 6, 7. **Diseased in his feet**—The disease is supposed by most interpreters to have been the gout. 2 Chronicles adds, (xvi, 12,) that “in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.” From the fact that the writer of Chronicles mentions the sins of Asa, which are passed over in silence by the writer of Kings, Wordsworth argues against the assumption of some, that the writer of Chronicles was partial to the house of David, and sought to cover up their faults. Chronicles makes no mention of Solomon’s apostasy, and Kings says nothing of Asa’s sins. Thus one of these sacred historians supplies the omissions of the other, and yet both together do not assume to give an exhaustive history of the subjects they take in hand. Large portions of their narrative are professedly excerpts from the public annals.

#### NADAB’S REIGN, 25–26.

**25. Nadab**—The first and last of Jeroboam’s house that succeeded him on the throne. Here was the end of the first Israelitish dynasty. Nadab’s acts, which were written in the public annals, (verse 31,) furnished no lessons worthy of transcription by the sacred writer.

#### BAASHA’S REIGN, xv, 27–xvi, 7.

**27. Baasha. . . house of Issachar**—That is, a descendant of the fifth son of Jacob by Leah, (Gen. xxx, 18,) whose lot in the tribe-division of the land is described Joshua xix, 17–23. **Conspired against him**—Baasha was probably commander, or chief captain, in Nadab’s army, and wickedly laid his schemes to assassinate the king, and use the army now at his command to establish himself upon the throne. **Gibbethon**—A city belonging to the territory of Dan. Josh. xix, 44. It was assigned, with its suburbs, to “the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath,” (Josh. xxi, 23,) but at the time of Nadab it was held by the **Philistines**, and probably they had always held it. It has not been identified with any modern town. **Laid siege to Gibbethon**—What led Nadab to turn his forces against this city does not appear. We learn from chapter xvi, 15 that the siege was continued in the time of Zimri.

**29. He smote all the house of Jeroboam**—Thus signally fulfilling the prophecy of Ahijah. Chap. xiv, 10–14. But this slaughter was not, on the part of Baasha, a design or desire to fulfil the word of the Lord; it was his policy, and the bloody policy of most ancient sovereigns and of all usurpers,

did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? **32** <sup>a</sup> And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. **33** In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah, twenty and four years. **34** And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in <sup>a</sup> the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**T**HEN the word of the LORD came to <sup>a</sup> Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha, saying, **2** <sup>b</sup> Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and made thee prince over my people Israel; and <sup>c</sup> thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; **3** Behold, I will <sup>a</sup> take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy

<sup>n</sup> Verse 13. — <sup>o</sup> Chap. 12. 28, 29; 13. 33; 14. 16. — <sup>a</sup> Verse 7; 2 Chron. 19. 2; 20. 34. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 14. 7. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 15. 34. — <sup>d</sup> Verse 11. — <sup>e</sup> Chap.

to rid themselves of every heir or claimant of the usurped possession.

**32. War between Asa and Baasha** — See note on verse 16.

**33. Twenty and four years** — That is, he reigned twenty-four years.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**1. Jehu the son of Hanani** — The Hanani here mentioned was, probably, the seer who reproved Asa for seeking help from the king of Syria. 2 Chron. xvi. 7. His son Jehu was early called to the same divine work which distinguished his father, and some thirty years after this we find him reproving Jehoshaphat, (2 Chron. xix. 2,) whose acts he afterwards wrote in a book. Chap. xix. 34. This prophecy (vs. 2-4) is substantially the same as that which Ahijah uttered against Jeroboam, (chap. xiv. 7-11,) and it should be observed that Jehu utters it against the very "king over Israel" whom Ahijah foretold as the instrument raised up by God to "cut off the house of Jeroboam." Chap. xiv. 14. But that prophecy of Jeroboam's fate gave Baasha no authority to massacre him and his house; and those bloody deeds exposed him further to the rebukes of Jehu. Verse 7.

house like <sup>a</sup> the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. **4** Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the field shall the fowls of the air eat. **5** Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, <sup>a</sup> *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? **6** So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in <sup>b</sup> Tirzah: and Elah his son reigned in his stead. **7** And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because <sup>a</sup> he killed him.

**8** In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years. **9** <sup>a</sup> And his servant Zunri, captain of half *his* chariots, conspired

14. 10; 15. 29. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 14. 11. — <sup>g</sup> 2 Chr. 16. 1. — <sup>h</sup> Chap. 14. 17; 15. 21. — <sup>i</sup> Ver. 1. — <sup>k</sup> Chap. 15. 27, 29; see Hos. 1. 4. — <sup>l</sup> 2 Kings 9. 31.

**7. Also** — Further reason why the word of the Lord came to Baasha by Jehu. **And because he killed him** — That is, killed Jeroboam. That assassination (chap. xv. 27) was a dark and bloody crime, which, though foreseen and foretold by Jehovah, was still wrought by wicked hands. God's prescience of his act took not from the daring Baasha the guilt of murder; and therefore, besides the oracles of judgment which Jehu uttered in verses 2-4, he *also* uttered other words of the Lord against Baasha, *because he had killed Jeroboam*.

## ELAH'S REIGN, 8-14.

**8. Elah** — The records of this king are a sad repetition of that of Nadab, the son of Jeroboam. As Nadab ended the first, so did Elah end the second, dynasty of Israelitish kings.

**9. Captain of half his chariots** — So, then, this northern kingdom had added to its other sins the transgression of the law forbidding the multiplication of horses, for chariots required their service. The whole cavalry force seems to have been divided into two portions, one of which served the army at the siege of Gibbethon,

against him, as he was in Tirzah, drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza steward of his house in Tirzah. **10** And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his stead. **11** And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him <sup>m</sup>not one that piss-eth against a wall, <sup>n</sup>neither of his kins-folks, nor of his friends. **12** Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, <sup>a</sup>according to the word of the Lord, which he spake against Baasha <sup>o</sup>by Jehu the prophet, **13** For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son, by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger <sup>p</sup>with their vanities. **14** Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

**15** In the twenty and seventh year of

1 Heb. *which was over*.—*m* 1 Sam. 25. 22.—*n* Or, *both his kinsmen and his friends*.—*o* Ver. 3.—*p* Heb. *by the hand of*.—*o* Ver. 1.—*p* Deut. 32. 21; 1 Sam. 12. 21; Isa. 41. 29;

the other remained near Tirzah, and over it Zimri had command. **Drinking himself drunk**—Surely it is not well for kings thus to drink wine. Proverbs xxxi, 4. Here we find that Elah was a drunken, licentious profligate, whose very debasement was a temptation for daring hands to take his life.

#### ZIMRI'S REIGN, 15-20.

**15. Zimri...seven days**—This is the shortest reign on record. Short lived are the glories bought by bloody hands. In this case divine vengeance followed so speedily that there leeded no prophet to utter it in word. **The people...encamped against Gibbethon**—This siege, begun by Nadab, was continued still. Compare chap. xv, 27. Evidently the possession of that city was much desired by the kings of Israel.

**16. And the people...all Israel**—Meaning all the men of Israel who were then present with Omri. Here it is equivalent to the army encamped before Gibbethon. **Made Omri...king**—The people preferred the captain of the host to the captain of the chariots.

Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people *were* encamped <sup>a</sup>against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines. **16** And the people *that were* encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: wherefore all Israel made <sup>b</sup>Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp. **17** And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah. **18** And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, that he went into the palace of the king's house, <sup>c</sup>and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and died, **19** For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, <sup>d</sup>in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did, to make Israel to sin. **20** Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

**21** Then were the people of Israel

Jonah 2. 8; 1 Cor. 8. 4; 10. 19.—*a* Chap. 15. 27.—*b* 2 Kings 8. 26; 2 Chron. 22. 2; Micah 4. 16.—*c* 2 Sam. 17. 23; Job 2. 9, 10; Matt. 27. 5.—*d* Chap. 12. 25; 15. 26, 34.

**17. Besieged Tirzah**—They raised the siege of Gibbethon and attacked the seditious Israelites, deeming it better to punish treason and assassination at home than to continue the tedious war with the Philistines.

**18. Palace of the king's house**—Rather, as Gesenius explains it, "*Fortress of the king's house*;" the innermost part, as the highest and strongest—the *citadel*. J. D. Michaelis, and after him most modern interpreters, here translate it *the women's apartment*; but there is no trace of this in the ancient interpreters, nor is there any reason for departing from the simple explanation given above. **Burnt the king's house over him with fire**—As Saracus, or Sardanapalus, is said to have done, when besieged in a similar way at Nineveh.

**20. His treason that he wrought**—Literally, *his conspiracy which he conspired*.

#### INTERREGNUM OF FOUR YEARS, 21-22.

In these two verses we have the spectacle of the northern kingdom existing for some four years in a state of civil war, with two contending chief

\*divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri. **22** But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.

*u* Prov. 28. 2; Matt. 12. 25.

tains struggling to gain the vacant throne. Bitterly do the seceding tribes reap the fruits of evil sowing; for not only are they given over to idolatry, but from this record appear half swallowed up in anarchy.

**21. Tibni the son of Ginath**—He was probably set up by the people of Tirzah, which was besieged by Omri. There was a class of people that did not wish a king set up and maintained by a military despotism. According to the Septuagint, Tibni was assisted by his brother Joram, and both died at that time.

**22. So Tibni died**—The record is so brief as to leave it doubtful whether he died naturally or by violence.

#### OMRI'S REIGN, 23-28.

**23. Twelve years**—Six at Tirzah and six at Samaria. With Omri began the third dynasty in the history of the kingdom of Israel; and from hints given in other parts of Scripture, and from the recently discovered inscription of Mesha, king of Moab, we infer that his reign was filled with many important events which our narrator passes over in utter silence. From chap. xx, 34, we infer that he had wars with Benhadad of Damascus, in which he lost some cities of his kingdom, perhaps Ramoth in Gilead among others. (Compare chapter xxii, 3.) The prophet Micah (vi, 16,) speaks of the *statutes of Omri*—probably commands for the people to observe his idolatrous worship, contrary to the statutes of Jehovah. And in the inscription above mentioned (on which see note 2 Kings iii, 4) the name of Omri occurs several times. "Omri was king of Israel, and he afflicted Moab many days." "Omri held possession of the land of Medeba." He may have oppressed Moab while captain of the host of Israel (verse 16) under Baasha or Elah.

**23** In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in Tirzah. **24** And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he

*v* 2 Kings 17. 1, 6, 24.

**24. Samaria**—"As Constantine's sagacity is fixed by his choice of Constantinople, so is that of Omri by his choice of Samaria. It was the only great city of Palestine created by the sovereigns. All the others had been already consecrated by patriarchal tradition or previous possession. But Samaria was the choice of Omri alone, and in Assyrian inscriptions it bears the name of *Beth-Khumri*—the house, or palace, of Omri. Six miles from Shechem, in the same well-watered valley, here opening into a wide basin, rises an oblong hill, with steep yet accessible sides, and a long level top. This was the mountain of Samaria, or, as it is called in the original, Shomeron, so named after its owner Shemer, who there lived in state, and who sold it to the king for the great sum of two talents of silver. [About \$3,320.] It combined in a union not elsewhere found in Palestine, strength, beauty, and fertility. It commanded a full view of the sea and the plain of Sharon on the one hand, and of the vale of Shechem on the other. The town sloped down from the summit of the hill; a broad wall with a terraced top ran round it. 2 Kings vi, 26, 30. Outside the gate lived a colony of unhappy lepers, (2 Kings vii, 3,) such as are still to be seen under the walls of Jerusalem. In front of the gates was a wide, open space, or threshing-floor, where the kings of Samaria sat on great occasions. 1 Kings xxii, 10. The inferior houses were built of white brick, with rafters of sycamore; the grander, of hewn stone and cedar. Isa. ix, 9, 10. It stood amidst a circle of hills, commanding a view of its streets and slopes, itself the crown and glory of the whole scene. Isa. xxviii, 1. Its soft, rounded, oblong platform was, as it were, a vast luxurious couch, in which its nobles rested securely, propped and cushioned

GEORGETOWN-SAMARA.



built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, <sup>4</sup> "Samaria. **25** But <sup>\*</sup>Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him. **26** For he <sup>y</sup>walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their <sup>\*</sup>vanities. **27** Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he showed, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? **28** So Omri slept with his fathers, and was

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *Shomeron*.—*w* Chap. 13. 32; 2 Kings 17. 24; John 4. 4.—*x* Micah 6. 16.

up on both sides, as in the cherished corner of a rich divan."—*Stanley*. It continued to be the capital city of the northern kingdom, and sustained many sieges, until Shalmaneser carried away Israel into Assyrian captivity. 2 Kings xvii. 6.

**25. Did worse than all that were before him**—Worse than Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, and Elah. "He went further than they had done," says Henry, "in establishing iniquity by law, and forcing his subjects to comply with him in it; for we read, Micah vi, 16, of the 'statutes of Omri,' the keeping of which made Israel a desolation." "We cannot doubt," remarks Kitto, "that these statutes of Omri were measures adopted for more completely isolating the people of Israel from the services of the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, and of perpetuating—perhaps increasing—their idolatrous practices."

#### THE BEGINNING OF AHAB'S REIGN, 29–34.

Critics have not failed to notice that with the beginning of Ahab's reign commences a new epoch in the history of Israel: new, not so much in the more flagrant forms of wickedness that manifest themselves, as in the relative importance of the kingdom of Israel during the reigns of Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jehoram. With the exception of Jeroboam the reigns of Ahab's predecessors are very briefly noticed, occupying but parts of two chapters; but the incidents of the three following reigns, embracing a period of about

thirty-five years, extend from this passage to the tenth chapter of 2 Kings.

**29** And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and two years. **30** And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that *were* before him. **31** And it came to pass, <sup>5</sup> as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, <sup>\*</sup>that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of

<sup>y</sup> Verse 19.—<sup>z</sup> Verse 13.—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *was it a light thing, &c.*—*a* Deut. 7. 3.

thirty-five years, extend from this passage to the tenth chapter of 2 Kings. During this period the kingdom of Judah receives comparatively little notice, and then only as an ally of the northern kingdom, which stands out predominantly as the mightiest ruling power in the land. During this period appeared those greatest, sternest, most mysterious of prophets, Elijah and Elisha, whose lives and acts, with strange romantic blendings, present on the one hand the fierce vindictiveness of the theocratic spirit towards sin, and on the other the tender and shrinking humanity which shows them up as men of like passions with ourselves. By means of Jezebel, the Zidonian princess, Phœnician idolatry is introduced and sanctioned in the kingdom, and Baal's prophets are multiplied by hundreds. Wars, attended with varying fortunes, are carried on with several hostile kingdoms, while within the land the few pious weep in desolate sadness, and hide themselves in caves and dens of the earth.

**30. Above all that were before him**—He even went beyond the hitherto unparalleled wickedness of Omri, his father.

**31. As if... a light thing... to walk in the sins of Jeroboam**—With him "it was nothing to break the second commandment by image-worship; he would set aside the first also by introducing other gods; his little finger should fall heavier upon God's ordinances than Jeroboam's toins."—*Henry*. **Jezebel**—From which name comes the modern *Isabella*. This is the first re-

the <sup>b</sup> Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. **32** And he reared up an altar for Baal in <sup>c</sup> the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. **33** And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel

<sup>b</sup> Judges 18. 7. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 21. 25, 26; 2 Kings 10. 18; 1<sup>st</sup>. 16. — <sup>d</sup> 2 Kings 10. 21, 26, 27.

recorded instance of an Israelitish king choosing his chief wife from among the Canaanites, and her marriage with Ahab has well been called a turning point in the history of Israel. Her character, as portrayed in the following chapters, is an embodiment of all that is most awful and terrible in the Clytemnestra of the Greek tragedians, and in the Lady Macbeth of Shakspeare. **Ethbaal**—Probably identical with *Eithobalus*, priest of Astarte, of whom Menander, the Ephesian, speaks in Josephus, *Apion* i, 18. He assassinated Phoeles, the reigning king, usurped the throne, and reigned thirty-two years. His position as priest of Astarte, whose worship was similar to that of Baal, may serve to explain the zeal which his daughter showed in introducing Phenician idolatry into the kingdom of Israel. **Zidonians**—This term seems to have been used among the Hebrews with as much latitude as was the term Phenicians among the Greeks. According to chap. v, 6, Hiram, king of Tyre, controls the Zidonian workmen, and Josephus calls Ethbaal king of the Tyrians and Zidonians. It is probable that both Tyre and Zidon, with the adjacent towns, were often under one government. **Served Baal**—As Solomon's heathen wives turned his heart after strange gods, (chap. xi, 4,) so Ahab's marriage with Jezebel leads him into Baal-worship. Baal was the chief male divinity among the Phenicians, as Ash-toreth was their female divinity. See on Judges ii, 13.

**32. An altar for Baal in the house of Baal**—That is, he built a temple in honour of this Zidonian god, and in it erected an altar on which sacrifices might be offered to him. Thus he added to the number of the houses of high places that were al-

that were before him. **34** In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

<sup>e</sup> 2 Kings 13. 6; 17. 10; 21. 3; Jer. 17. 2. — <sup>f</sup> Ver. 30; chap. 21. 25. — <sup>g</sup> Josh. 6. 26.

ready in the land. Compare chap. xii, 31.

**33. Made a grove**—Literally, *made the Asherah*; that is, he erected an idol-image of Asherah, another form of the name Ashtoreth or Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians. See chap. xiv, 15. So he worshipped the male and female deities of Phenicia.

**34. Hiel the Bethelite**—A native of that city which had so long been the scene of Israelitish calf-worship, and, perhaps, a despiser of Jehovah and his laws. He was thus a fit person to undertake the daring work here mentioned. **Build Jericho**—Joshua pronounced a curse upon the man who should attempt to rebuild the walls of Jericho, (Josh. vi, 26; where see note,) and several hundred years had passed with no one so impious as to despise that curse. The place had been inhabited, but no one had ventured to fortify it and set up the gates. It seems to have now become the possession of the northern kingdom, and Ahab's design in having it fortified was probably to make it a frontier garrison to command the passage over the Jordan. **Laid the foundation thereof in Abiram**—That is, at the cost of his life. Thus, in chap. ii, 23, Solomon says that Adonijah had spoken a certain word בְּנִפְשׁוֹ, *in his life*,

that is, at the cost of his life. The manner in which the Divine judgment fell upon Hiel's sons—whether by natural or by violent deaths—whether the firstborn died when he laid the foundation, and the youngest when he set up the gates—is nowhere stated, and so far as that is unknown so far will there be a degree of mystery hanging over this text. But the record will ever stand as a warning that no man may lightly treat Jehovah's word and live.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**A**ND <sup>1</sup>Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of Gilead, said

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *Eljahhu*; Luke 1. 17, *Elias*.  
a 2 Kings 3. 14.

## CHAPTER XVII.

ELIJAH THE TISHBITE, 1-24.

1. **Elijah the Tishbite** — "This wonder-working prophet," says Doran, (in Kitto's *Cyclopædia*,) "is introduced to our notice like another Melchizedek, (Gen. xiv. 18; Heb. vii. 3,) without any mention of his father or mother, or of the beginning of his days—as if he had dropped out of that cloudy chariot which, after his work was done on earth, conveyed him back to heaven." Or, as Krummacher says, his sudden appearance is like lightning falling from the clouds, or a firebrand hurled by the hand of Jehovah. In the weird grandeur of his desert life, in the fiery spirit of his words, and the power of his public acts, he stands alone among the old prophets, and finds a compeer only as his spirit and power are reproduced in that greatest of the prophets, the herald of Messiah, who came crying in the wilderness of Judea, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. iii. 2. The miraculous element in the history of Elijah is noticeably large, and in this Rationalism can, of course, see nothing but the colored legends of a superstitious age. But there are obvious reasons why a prophet of Jehovah, appearing at that time, and having to oppose an almost triumphant idolatry that had usurped the kingdom of Israel, should be supported everywhere with extraordinary evidences of his divine mission. Whenever the powers of darkness appear incarnate in **some such** ruling personage as Jezebel, with her hosts of Baal and Asherah prophets, then our God provides an incarnation of his Divine Spirit and power, with suitable signs and wonders to confuse and confound the ministers of Satan. Such an incarnation was Elijah. Such, too, was Moses, in opposition to Pharaoh and the gods of Egypt. Such, indeed, was Jesus the Christ, appearing in that "fulness of

unto Ahab, <sup>a</sup> As the LORD God of Israel liveth, <sup>b</sup> before whom I stand, <sup>c</sup> there shall not be dew nor rain <sup>d</sup> these years,

<sup>b</sup> Deut. 10. 8.—<sup>c</sup> James 5. 17.—<sup>d</sup> Luke 4. 25; Rev. 11. 6.

the time" (Gal. iv. 4) when such an incarnation as his alone could be was most opportune, inasmuch as legions of devils had actually taken possession of multitudes, and no power but that of his Divine voice and name could cast them out. And so it will be in the last times, when the good and the evil come to their final struggle, and that lawless one shall be revealed, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming." 2 Thess. ii. 8. Extraordinary manifestations of wickedness demand extraordinary manifestations of the power of God. **Of the inhabitants of Gilead**—By a slight change in the Masoretic punctuation we may read, *Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbi of Gilead*; and this is the reading of the Septuagint, Chaldee, and Josephus. Some have thought this place identical with the *Thisbe* mentioned in Tobit i. 2; but that was a town in Naphtali, while this was in Gilead. The most natural supposition, therefore, is, that Elijah was called the Tishbite from being a native or resident of a place in Gilead called Tishbi or Tishbeh, of which no other trace or mention is now known. The wild, irregular, Bedouin-like character of much of Elijah's life is in noticeable keeping with his Gileadite origin. The tribes on the east of the Jordan soon fell into the habits of the original Bedouin inhabitants, whose wandering tent life and almost inaccessible mountain fastnesses made them in ancient times what they are now—a people of wild, unsettled habits. **As the Lord God of Israel liveth**—A suggestive and significant formula, and somewhat peculiar to Elijah himself. His mission was to proclaim the *living* God in opposition to Ahab's *dead*, senseless idols. **Before whom I stand**—Words expressive of a sacred ministry and office, and used of the Levites who bore the ark. Deut. x. 8. Solemn and sublime is the position of him who stands

out according to my word. **2** And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, **3** Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. **4** And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the

e Job 38, 41; Psalm

to minister before Jehovah, the living God. **Not be dew nor rain**—This was a punishment which Jehovah had threatened in case of idolatry. Deut. xi, 16-17. St. James says, that Elijah "prayed earnestly that it might not rain." James v, 17. So Divine judgments may come in answer to prayer; and the spirit of such prayer is the Elijah-spirit, which also breathes in the vindictive Psalms. The manner of Elijah's praying for rain to come again is told at chap. xviii, 42. **These years**—No definite time is specified, but all is made dependent on the word of the Lord as uttered by the prophet. Ahab's obstinacy continued the drought for three years and a half. See chap. xviii, 1.

**3. Hide thyself**—"Elijah's escapes from the hands of his enemies, and his departures into unknown places, are faint resemblances of the mysterious vanishings of our Lord after he had delivered some of those Divine messages which excited the anger of the people. Luke iv, 29; John viii, 59; x, 39. Compare the promise to the Church of God. Rev. xii, 6-14."—*Wordsworth*. **The brook Cherith**—This was some mountain stream running into the Jordan; but what was its locality, and whether on the east or west side of the Jordan, is unknown. Dr. Robinson makes it identical with Wady el Kelt, which rises amid the hills of the wilderness of Judea, and runs through the Jordan plain near Jericho. Others have suggested other streams on either side of the Jordan, but nothing sufficient has been brought forward to settle the question. Local traditions have uniformly placed it on the west of the river.

**4. I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there**—This plain and positive statement defies all attempts to explain the facts stated in verse 6 on rationalistic or naturalistic principles.

**6. Ravens brought him bread**

and flesh to feed thee there. **5** So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. **6** And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank

147. 9; Matt. 4. 4, 11.

**and flesh**—Many attempts have been made to explain away the obvious import of this verse. J. D. Michaelis explains it on natural principles, supposing the brook Cherith was a place where ravens were wont to congregate, and that Elijah took from their nests, morning and evening, the young hares and other food which they brought to their young. Others have explained עֲרָבִים, *orebim*, to mean *Arabians*; others, the inhabitants of some place named Orbo, or Oreb; and some have thought the word might mean *merchants*, from עָרַב, *to traffic*. But these explanations have the versions and all tradition against them. The text plainly records a miracle; all the more impressive from the fact that ravens, the most voracious of birds, furnish the prophet his supplies. Since the raven is a carrion bird, and a devourer of all manner of dead flesh, some have wondered how Elijah could eat without scruple all that was brought to him; but they absurdly assume that ravens miraculously sent by Divine command would bring what was common or unclean. Alike idle is it to inquire whether they obtained the bread and flesh through Obadiah (compare chap. xviii, 4) or stole it from Ahab's kitchen.

"When men disobey," says Wordsworth, "God reproves them by the obedience of the inferior creatures. The old world disbelieved God's warnings by Noah, would not go into the ark, and so perished in the flood; but the inferior animals went in and were fed there. Balaam was rebuked for his disobedience by the ass on which he rode. The disobedient prophet (chap. xiii, 26) was slain by the lion which God sent from the forest, and which spared the ass and the carcass of the prophet. The disobedience of Ahab

of the brook. **7** And it came to pass <sup>2</sup>after a while, that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land. **8** And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, **9** Arise, get thee to 'Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. **10** So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a ves-

2 Heb. *at the end of days*.—f Obad. 20;

and Israel was rebuked by the obedience of the ravenous birds in bringing food to Elijah. Jonah fled from God, and God sent the whale to bring him back to prophesy against Nineveh. The lions spared Daniel when his colleagues would have slain him. Christ was with the wild beasts in peace, (Mark i, 13,) when he was about to be rejected by mankind."

**7. After a while**—Margin, *At the end of days*. He probably dwelt by the brook Cherith a year. See note on chap. xviii, 1.

**9. Zarephath**—An ancient city about half way between Sidon and Tyre, called *Sarepta* in Luke iv, 26, and at present *Surafend*. "It would seem," says Dr. Robinson, "that the former city of Sarepta stood near the seashore; and that the present village bearing the same name upon the adjacent hills, has sprung up since the time of the crusades; the people having probably chosen to remove thither for the same reason, whatever it may have been, which has caused the abandonment of all the rest of the plain. In the rocks along the foot of the hills are many excavated tombs, once doubtless belonging to the ancient city." The ancient site is marked by "broken foundations and irregular heaps of stones." **I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee**—The widow, like the ravens, supplies Elijah by Divine command; a command, however, not audibly laid upon them. As the ravens obeyed, unconscious of the Divine power that controlled them, so largely with this woman.

sel, that I may drink. **11** And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. **12** And she said, *As the LORD thy God liveth*, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. **13** And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and

Luke 4. 26, *Sarepta*.—g 2 Kings 4. 2, 7.

**10. He came to the gate**—An old tradition points out the spot on the south of the ancient city where Elijah first saw the widow, and the crusaders built a small chapel over the reputed spot of the widow's house. **Gathering of sticks**—A scene that often meets the traveller's eye in Palestine.

**12. As the Lord thy God liveth**—This was a formula somewhat peculiar to Elijah, (see verse 1,) and her use of it indicates in her a knowledge and reverence of the God of Israel. But that she was a heathen, and not belonging to the tribes of Israel, seems evident from the manner in which she is mentioned in this passage, and also from the manner in which Jesus speaks of her in Luke iv, 26. It is significant that in the time of famine Elijah finds a home and food in the land of Ethbaal, the father of the wicked Jezebel, (chap. xvi, 31,) and in the house of a poor heathen widow, in whom he finds, as Jesus found in a woman of this same land, (Matt. xv, 28,) a faith unequalled in Israel. **A barrel**—**גַּב**, *a pitcher, a*

*bucket, or jar*, for holding meal or carrying water. Gen. xxiv, 14. **Cruse**—A flask for holding liquids. See cut at 1 Sam. xxvi, 11. **Two sticks**—That is, a few sticks. So *two sheep*, (Isa. vii, 21;) and *two days*, (Hosea vi, 2,) mean a few sheep and a few days. **Eat it, and die**—A picture of uttermost woe and want; but a means of developing in her a noble faith.

**13. Make me . . . a little cake first**—Here was a sore trial of her faith. What! share her last morsel with a stranger!

for thy son. **14** For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the Lord <sup>s</sup>sendeth rain upon the earth. **15** And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat <sup>many</sup> days. **16** And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake <sup>by</sup> Elijah. **17** And it came to pass after

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *giveth*.—<sup>4</sup> Or, *a full year*.—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *by the hand of*.—<sup>h</sup> 2 Kings 4. 18, 20; Zech. 12. 10; John 11. 3, 4.

**14. Until . . . the Lord sendeth rain**—It is evident the dearth extended into Phenicia, and Menander (in Josephus) says, that in the reign of Ethbaal there was a want of rain for a whole year.

**15. She went and did according to the saying of Elijah**—"It was one of those sudden recognitions of unknown kindred souls—one of those cross purposes of Providence—which come in with a peculiar charm to checker the commonplace course of ecclesiastical history. The Phenician mother knew not what great destinies lay in the hand of that gaunt figure at the city gate, worn with travel, and famine, and drought. But she listened to his cry, and saved in him the deliverer of herself and her son. It may be that this incident is the basis of the sacred blessing of the Prophet of prophets on those who, even by a cup of cold water, receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward."—*Stanley*. **And her house**—There were others, then, in that household besides herself and son.

these things, *that* the <sup>h</sup>son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. **18** And she said unto Elijah, <sup>i</sup>What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? <sup>k</sup>art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? **19** And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed.

<sup>i</sup> See Luke 5. 8.—<sup>k</sup> Genesis 42. 21; 1 Samuel 16. 4; Job 13. 23, 26; Ezekiel 21. 23, 24; Mark 5. 7.

**16. The barrel of meal wasted not**—Here was an exhibition of that same Divine power that in the person of Jesus of Nazareth multiplied the loaves and fishes.

**17. No breath left in him**—This statement, together with the words of the prophet in verses 20 and 21, clearly show that the child was dead.

**18. What have I to do with thee**—Language of confusion, agony, and alarm. A consciousness of her past sins rises up and makes her look on this bereavement as a penal judgment, and on Elijah as the instrument of her woe! Like the disciples who regarded all human sorrow as a punishment for sin, (John ix, 2,) she did not yet understand that it often serves to show forth the glorious power of God.

**19. A loft**—הַעֲלִיָּה, *the aliyah*; *the upper chamber*. "This is the most desirable part of an establishment, is best fitted up, and is still given to guests who are to be treated with honour. It is more retired than the



HOUSE, WITH ALIYEH.

**20** And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? **21** <sup>1</sup>And he <sup>2</sup>stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come <sup>3</sup>into him again. **22** And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the

child came into him again, and he <sup>m</sup>re-lived. **23** And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. **24** And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this <sup>a</sup>I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in thy mouth is truth.

<sup>1</sup>2 Kings 4. 34, 35. — <sup>6</sup> Hebrew, *measured*.  
<sup>7</sup> Heb. *into his inward parts*.

<sup>m</sup> Hebrews 11. 35. — <sup>n</sup> John 3. 2;  
16. 30.

lower apartments of the house, and, of course, appropriate for the restingplace of prophets. The poorer sort of houses have no *aliyah*. We may infer from this word that the mode of building in Elijah's time, and the custom of giving the *aliyah* to the guest, were the same as now; also, that this widow was not originally among the very poorest classes, but that her extreme destitution was owing to the dreadful famine which then prevailed."—*Thomson*.

**20. Hast thou also brought evil**—Not the language of reproach or complaint, but the emotional expression of profoundest sympathy with the widow's affliction, and of the earnestness of Elijah's faith and prayer.

**21. He stretched himself upon the child three times**—This procedure should be compared with Elisha's in raising the son of the Shunammite woman, (2 Kings iv, 34, note,) and Paul's in restoring Eutychus, (Acts xx, 10.) Elijah had no power, like Christ, to raise the dead by a single word of command; (Luke vii, 14; viii, 54; John xi, 43;) but confident that God would, through his agency, bring the child's soul back again, he resorts to every rational means, and prays with greatest fervency for the desired result. *Three* was a sacred number; and the prophet's thrice stretching himself upon the child was in keeping with the threefold form of daily prayer among the pious Israelites, (Psa. lv, 17, Dan. vi, 10,) and the threefold benediction of the high priest. Num. vi, 23.

**22. The soul of the child came into him again**—That which leaves the body when it dies is sometimes called the *soul* (Gen. xxxv, 18) and sometimes the *spirit*, (Eccles xii, 7,) and

hence we may argue that, according to biblical psychology, soul and spirit are never separated from each other, though as regards their essential nature they may be distinguished. The question of the separate conscious existence and immortality of the disembodied soul is not involved in this text, but the distinction between soul and body is plainly recognised. More minute is the distinction between soul and spirit, the latter being the deathless, God-like principle in man, that distinguishes him from the whole irrational creation; the soul, the lower principle, the seat of the animal life and feeling, intermediate between spirit and body, and by the agency of which the spirit is able to control the movements of the body. "Plainly," says Delitzsch, "according to Scripture, soul and spirit outlast the corruption of the body. Nevertheless, it is true of the soul, in a certain sense, that it dies. It dies so far as it was wont to centralize in itself the natural powers of the body, and to pervade the organs of the body with its own spirit-like life. It does not die, so far as it is of the spirit, (Matt. x, 28;) but it dies, so far as it has become of the body. Its life that has emanated from the spirit endures; but its life that is immanent in the body perishes with the body itself."—*Biblical Psychology*, p. 469.

**23. Thy son liveth**—This is the first recorded instance of a resurrection from the dead. Many suppose that this youth became that servant of Elijah mentioned chaps. xviii, 43; xix, 3. An old tradition affirms his identity with the prophet Jonah, who afterwards proclaimed the word of the Lord to Nineveh.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**A**ND it came to pass *after* <sup>a</sup>many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto Ahab; and <sup>b</sup>I will send rain upon the earth. **2** And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab. And *there was* a sore famine in Samaria. **3** And Ahab called <sup>1</sup>Obadiah, which *was* <sup>2</sup>the governor of *his* house. Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: **4** For it was *so*, when <sup>3</sup>Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water. **5** And Ahab said

unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, <sup>4</sup>that we lose not all the beasts. **6** So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself. **7** And as Obadiah <sup>c</sup>was in the way, behold, Elijah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, Art thou that my lord Elijah? **8** And he answered him, I *am*: go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*. **9** And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the

<sup>a</sup> Luke 4. 25; James 5. 17. — <sup>b</sup> Deut. 28. 12. — <sup>1</sup> Heb. *Obadiahu*. — <sup>2</sup> Heb. *over his house*.

<sup>3</sup> Heb. *Izebel*. — <sup>4</sup> Heb. *that we cut not off ourselves from the beasts*. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 11. 29.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

ELIJAH'S MEETING WITH AHAB, AND CONTEST WITH THE FALSE PROPHETS, 1-40.

**1. In the third year**—Some time during the third year of Elijah's stay at Zarephath. He probably dwelt by the Cherith about a year, and at Zarephath two years and six months: this would make the three years and six months mentioned by Jesus (Luke iv, 25) and James. James v, 17. No definite time was mentioned when Elijah first announced the drought; (chap. xvii, 1;) rain was to return only according to the word of the Lord; but Ahab's wickedness continued it through the long period here specified. These three years and a half suggest the "time, times, and the dividing of a time," the prophetic period of the Church's woes. Comp. Dan. vii, 25; xii, 7; Rev. xii, 14.

**2. Sore famine in Samaria**—While it is clear, from chap. xvii, 12-14, that the famine extended beyond the kingdom of Israel, it is still probable that it was especially oppressive in Samaria, and the provinces immediately adjacent.

**3. Governor of his house**—Literally, *Obadiah, who was over the house*; lord-chamberlain of the palace, an officer of high rank and great influence in the kingdom. This is specially remarkable in view of Obadiah's marked piety, and the wickedness of the royal family.

**4. When Jezebel cut off the prophets**—Whence it appears that

this woman had not only set up Baal-worship in Israel, but had also persecuted unto death the true prophets of Jehovah. This persecution she had probably ordered in vengeance and passion because Elijah could not be found, (verse 10,) and on suspicion that they were privy to his concealment.

**A hundred prophets**—These were doubtless mostly members of the prophetic schools, now numerous in Israel. See note on 1 Sam. x, 5. **Hide them by fifty in a cave**—That is, hid them in two caves, fifty in each cave. These were they "of whom the world was not worthy," mentioned in Heb. xi, 38, as noble exemplars of faith.

**6. They divided the land between them**—This shows further how high was the position of Obadiah in the service and confidence of the king. It is said to be a custom in the East, when a public calamity reaches its highest point, for the king himself and his chief minister to go forth and seek relief.

**7. Thou that my lord Elijah**—His language, as well as his action, on meeting and recognising Elijah, was full of emotion and surprise. Is it thou, to find whom every royal device has been exhausted: thou, Elijah, in broad daylight, right here near the gates of Samaria!

**9. What have I sinned**—For Obadiah to announce the presence of Elijah to Ahab would, in his judgment, expose him to the suspicion that he had concealed him during all these

hand of Ahab, to slay me? **10** *As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.* **11** And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*. **12** And it shall come to pass, *as soon as I am gone from thee, that "the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.* **13** Was it not told my lord *"what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how "I hid a hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread*

*d 2 Kings 2. 16; Ezekiel 3. 12, 14; Matthew 4. 1; Acts 8. 39.—e Verse 4; Psalm 18. 21.—f Matthew 10. 41, 42.*

years of famine, and thus draw down on him the wrath of the king and queen—a fate to which he deserved not to be exposed. It appears also, from verse 12, that this pious Israelite had a superstitious fear of Elijah.

**10. No nation or kingdom**—Ahab had sought far and near for the stern prophet, whom he regarded as the troubler of Israel. Verse 17. "It was then, doubtless, as it still is, the belief of Eastern countries that seers and saints have the power of withholding or giving rain. In the convent of Mount Sinai the Arabs believe that there is a book, by the opening or shutting of which the monks can disperse or retain the rain of the peninsula."—*Stanley*. **Took an oath...** **that they found thee not**—That is, he made each nation and kingdom through which he sought swear to him that they had not found the prophet, and knew not the place of his concealment.

**12. The Spirit... carry thee whither I know not**—An allusion, perhaps, to the sudden disappearance of Elijah after his announcement of the drought to Ahab. Chap. xvii, 1. There seems to have been so much of the weird and solemn about Elijah as even to inspire the pious Obadiah with a fear of him.

**13. Was it not told**—So his hiding of the prophets had been reported to Ahab, but, perhaps, not to Jezebel.

and water? **14** And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here*: and he shall slay me. **15** And Elijah said, *As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to day.* **16** So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah. **17** And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, *"Art thou he that "troubleth Israel?* **18** And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, *"in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim.* **19** Now therefore send, *and gather to me all Israel unto mount "Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, "and the*

*g Chapter 21. 20.—h Joshua 7. 25; Acts 16. 20.—i 2 Chronicles 15. 2.—k Joshua 19. 26.—l Chapter 16. 33.*

His tamer spirit would not rush to the extremes to which her fiery nature carried her, and he might naturally wish to check somewhat her persecution of the prophets. But Obadiah fears that if the king suspects him of intimacy with Elijah nothing will save him from the fury of Ahab's wrath.

**16. Obadiah went to meet Ahab**—It was doubtless better that the king's mind be a little prepared for the meeting with Elijah, by having the prophet's presence preannounced.

**17. Art thou he that troubleth Israel**—The question was equivalent to an affirmative. The king assumed, and charged it upon Elijah, that he had caused the famine. We might render: *Art thou that Achar (Achan) of Israel?* Compare Josh. vii, 1, with 1 Chron. ii, 7.

**18. Thou, and thy father's house**—Here observe, in one of its most noticeable forms, the stern and denunciatory attitude of the Old Testament prophets toward the unfaithful monarchy of Israel. The power of Elijah's stern and fearless words changed the monarch's anger into awe. **Baalim**—This plural form of the word Baal may designate both the various images erected to him, and also the many aspects of character and power in which he was regarded by his worshippers.

**19. Mount Carmel**—See at Josh xix, 26. "Carmel was the peculiar

prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. **20** So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and <sup>m</sup>gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. **21** And Elijah came unto all the people, and said,

*m* Chap. 23, 6.—*n* 2 Kings 17, 41;  
Matt. 6, 24.

haunt of Elijah. On its eastern summit, commanding the last view of the Mediterranean Sea and the first view of the great plain of Esdraelon, just where the glades of forest—the 'excellency' whence it derives its name—sink into the usual bareness of the hills of Manassch, a rock is still shown bearing the name of *Maharrakah*—'the sacrifice.' On this rock stood an altar of Jehovah, (verse 30,) which had, in all probability, been destroyed in the recent persecution. On this same spot, probably, long afterwards, Vespasian sacrificed when commanding the Roman armies in Palestine; and to this the Druses still come in yearly pilgrimage. In the distance, and on its commanding position overlooking the whole valley, rose the stately city of Jezreel, with Ahab's palace and Jezebel's temple embosomed in its sacred grove. Immediately under their feet spread far and wide that noble plain—the battlefield of sacred history—the plain of Megiddo, or Jezreel, with the torrent Kishon passing, as its name implies, in countless windings through the level valley; that 'ancient stream,' on whose banks had perished the host of Sisera and the host of Midian before the army of Deborah and Barak, before the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. In such a scene, with such recollections of the past, were the people of Israel gathered for a conflict as momentous as any which had taken place in the plain beneath."—*Stanley*. **Prophets of the groves**—Rather, *Prophets of Asherah*, the female divinity of the Zidonians, and often called *Ashtoreth*. Chap. xi, 5–33; Judges ii, 13; 1 Sam. vii, 3, 4. In this verse Baal and Asherah are mentioned together as in Judges ii, 13. The one was the male, the other the female deity of the Phenicians. See note on chap. xiv, 15. The prophets of Asherah were specially

"How long halt ye between two <sup>a</sup>opinions? if the Lord *be* God, follow him: but if Baal, <sup>o</sup>then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. **22** Then said Elijah unto the people, <sup>i</sup>I, even I only, remain a prophet of the

5 Or, *thoughts*?—*o* See Josh. 24, 15.  
*p* Chap. 19, 10, 14.

petted and patronized by Jezebel, though they seem not to have been quite as numerous as those of Baal. They **ate at Jezebel's table**, were treated as members of the royal family. The multitude of false prophets here specified (850) shows the zeal and success with which the queen had introduced her national idolatry into the kingdom of Israel. The strong hold which the newly-introduced idolatry now had upon the kingdom shows, also, the demand there was for the miraculous vindication at Carmel of the true worship of Jehovah, and the overwhelming defeat and disgrace of the worship and worshippers of Baal.

**21. How long halt ye between two opinions**—Septuagint: *How long limp ye on both your knees?* That is, how long will ye totter and waver in your religious walk, now this side and then that, not knowing whether it be better to serve Jehovah or Baal, but rather trying to keep on good terms with both. Clarke, after some of the older interpreters, translates, *How long hop ye about on two boughs?* and explains the metaphor as taken from birds hopping about from bough to bough, not knowing on which to settle. "They dreaded Jehovah, and, therefore, could not totally abandon him; they feared the king and queen, and, therefore, thought they must embrace the religion of the State. Their conscience forbade them doing the former; their fear of man persuaded them to do the latter; but in neither were they heartily engaged." So they **answered him not a word**.

**22. I only**—Strange contrast, and, apparently, unequal contest! Other true prophets may have been hidden in caves, (verse 4,) but Elijah alone appeared for Jehovah on this occasion. On the one side stood the lone prophet with flowing beard and leathern girdle,

LORD; <sup>9</sup> but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. **23** Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: **24** And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that <sup>r</sup> answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, <sup>q</sup> It is well spoken. **25** And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and

<sup>q</sup> Verse 19.—<sup>r</sup> Verse 38: 1 Chron. 21. 26.—<sup>s</sup> Heb. *The word is good.*—<sup>7</sup> Or, *answer.*—<sup>8</sup> Psal. 115. 5; Jer. 10. 5; 1 Cor. 8. 4; 12. 2.—<sup>8</sup> Or,

(2 Kings i, 8), on the other, four hundred and fifty splendidly robed (2 Kings x, 22) priests of Baal, and on the neighbouring slope were assembled thousands of Israelites to witness the memorable contest. It seems that for some reason the queen had kept her Asherah prophets away from the scene of conflict.

**24. The God that answereth by fire**—Baal was the sun-god, and his worshippers might readily suppose that, having at his command the source of light and fire, he would in such a strife vindicate himself in answering by fire. Surely, Elijah might have urged, your sun-god should find it easy, in the use of his own element, to triumph over Jehovah.

**26. They leaped upon the altar**—The word translated *leaped* is the Piel form of the same word rendered *halt* in verse 21. They danced and tottered around and upon the altar they had made, from morning till noon, and yet no answer from Baal. This, says Stanley, "is the exact picture of Oriental fanaticism, such as may still be seen in Eastern religions. As the Mussulman dervishes work themselves into a frenzy by the invocation of *Allah! Allah!* until the words themselves are lost in inarticulate gasps—as the pilgrims round the church of St. John at Samaria formerly, and round the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre now, race, run, and tumble, in order to bring down the Divine fire into the midst of them—so the four hundred and fifty

dress *it* first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*. **26** And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, <sup>7</sup> hear us. But *there was* <sup>8</sup> no voice, nor any that <sup>8</sup> answered. And they <sup>9</sup> leaped upon the altar which was made. **27** And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry <sup>10</sup> aloud: for he *is* a god; either <sup>11</sup> he is talking, or he <sup>12</sup> is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. **28** And they

*heard.*—<sup>9</sup> Or, *leaped up and down at the altar.*—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *with a great voice.*—<sup>11</sup> Or, *he meditateth.*—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *hath a pursuit.*

prophets of Baal performed their wild dances round their altar, or upon it, springing up or sinking down with the fantastic gestures which Orientals alone can command, as if by an internal mechanism, and screaming with that sustained energy which believes it will be heard for its much speaking."

**27. Mocked them**—A mockery consisting of the most biting ridicule, irony, and sarcasm imaginable. **Cry aloud**—Scream with a great voice. Your god cannot hear your low tones; he needs a mighty noise to call his attention to these parts, where his interests are sadly at stake! **For he is a god**—Rather, *For God is he!* He is, of course, the Supreme Divinity! He must be that, or nothing at all. **He is talking**—Talking with somebody else, and don't know of the sore distress of his four hundred and fifty prophets here! Or שִׁח may mean, as in the margin, *He meditateth*. He is all swallowed up in profound contemplation; in such a brown study that at present he knows nothing else! **He is pursuing**—This is an erroneous rendering of שָׁרַח, which means *a withdrawing, retirement*. The idea here expressed euphemistically is, *He has gone aside*, that is, to do his need. "He covereth his feet in his summer chamber." Judges iii, 24. **He is in a journey**—He has, perhaps, gone travelling, and ought to be called home again to take care of his worshippers, who are terribly annoyed by his absence! **He sleepeth**—And he sleeps so

cried aloud, and 'cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till <sup>13</sup>the blood gushed out upon them. **29** And it came to pass, when midday was past, <sup>14</sup>and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that *there was* <sup>15</sup>neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any <sup>16</sup>that regarded. **30** And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him.

<sup>13</sup> Lev. 19. 28; Deut. 14. 1.—<sup>14</sup> Heb. *poured out blood upon them.*—<sup>15</sup> 1 Cor. 11. 4. 5.—<sup>16</sup> Heb. *ascending.*

soundly that it doubtless needs a great voice to start him up!

**28. Cut themselves . . . till the blood gushed out**—"The prophets of Baal took Elijah at his word. Like the dervishes, who eat glass, seize living snakes with their teeth, throw themselves prostrate for their mounted chief to ride over them—like the Corybantic priests of Cybele—like the fakirs of India—they now, in their frenzied state, tossed to and fro the swords and lances which formed part of their fantastic worship, and gashed themselves and each other till they were smeared with blood, and mingled with their loud yells to the . . . divinity those ravings which formed the dark side of ancient prophecy."—*Stanley*.

**29. They prophesied**—In the manner described in the last verse. See note on 1 Sam. xviii, 10. **Until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice**—Or, *until towards the offering*. The time is indicated only approximately. There is nothing in the Hebrew that answers to *evening*, which is here supplied by our translators; but the context shows that the evening sacrifice is meant, for from morning until after midday had the priests of Baal kept up their orgies. The evening sacrifice was offered "between the two evenings." Exod. xxix, 39; Num. xxviii, 4. This expression also designates the time at which the paschal lamb was killed. See note on Exod. xii, 6. The exact hour was disputed even by the ancients. It would seem from a casual remark of Josephus (*Antiquities*, xiv, 4, 3) to have been about the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon.

<sup>17</sup> And he repaired the altar of the Lord *that was broken down*. **31** And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, <sup>18</sup>Israel shall be thy name: **32** And with the stones he built an altar <sup>19</sup>in the name of the Lord: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. **33** And he <sup>20</sup>put the wood in order, and

<sup>17</sup> Verse 26.—<sup>18</sup> Heb. *attention.*—<sup>20</sup> Chap. 19. 10.—<sup>19</sup> Gen. 32. 28; 33. 10; 2 Kings 17. 34.—<sup>21</sup> Col. 3. 17.—<sup>22</sup> Lev. 1. 6-8.

**30. Come near**—The people had, perhaps, withdrawn somewhat, being shocked at the wild dances and ravings of the false prophets, whose number, too, would not allow the people to approach so closely to the scene as when Elijah became the sole minister at the altar. **He repaired the altar of the Lord**—One of those altars which had been erected and used before the days of Solomon, when "the people sacrificed in high places, because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord." See chap. iii, 2. This altar must have been on the same summit where the priests of Baal had just been worshipping, but a little distance removed from the spot of their orgies. It had probably been **broken down** at the time of Jezebel's persecution, (compare verse 4 with chap. xix, 10,) and Elijah repaired it in the manner described in the two following verses, for he would not use the altar which the false prophets had made, and had polluted with their hideous idolatries.

**31. Twelve stones**—Indicative of the twelve tribes; and like those which were taken out of the midst of Jordan and set up at Gilgal, (Josh. iv, 3, 20,) a memorial of the national unity and Divine election of Israel. **Israel shall be thy name**—Perhaps Elijah, while building the altar, audibly repeated these words in the ears of all the people, and would thus teach by word as well as symbol that the whole twelve tribes, not ten merely, were named Israel. The division of Israel into two kingdoms was the result of sin.

**32. As great as would contain two measures of seed**—This means, according to Thenius and Keil, that

cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said. Fill four barrels with water, and <sup>a</sup>pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. **34** And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said,

*a* See Judges 6. 20.

the space taken up by the whole trench was as large as that on which two measures of grain would ordinarily be sown. But this would have made the trench enclose a space incredibly large. The *measures* here mentioned are in the Hebrew *seahs*, containing at the lowest estimate about six quarts, and twelve quarts of grain would be more than enough to sow over the entire level space of the summit of el-Mohrakah, which is about twenty rods square. It is better, therefore, to understand that the trench itself would hold about twelve quarts of grain or water. It was dug to catch and hold the water which Elijah proposed to pour over the altar, and thus to show the people that there was no secret way of letting it off. It needed no large trench to answer this purpose, and no deep trench could easily be dug in that rocky surface; but the shallow soil now on the rock would be sufficient for a trench capable of holding three gallons, and the soil may have been deeper in Elijah's time. "I myself observed," writes Professor Mead, (*Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1873, p. 685,) "close to the Mohrakah, a rocky surface, artificially smoothed, about eight feet square, around the edge of which had been dug a groove an inch or two in depth. One might almost be tempted to find in that the foundation and trench of the very altar itself."

**33. Fill four barrels**—These barrels were the common water jars which are still used in the East for carrying water, and probably contained from three to five gallons apiece. The original word (כַּד) is the same as that used chap. xvii, 12, designating the vessel in which the widow kept her meal. It is translated *pitcher* in Gen. xxiv, 14, 15, and Judges vii, 16. The object of flooding the bullock and the wood with these vessels of water was mani-

Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time. **35** And the water <sup>10</sup>ran round about the altar; and he filled <sup>b</sup>the trench also with water. **36** And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet

16 Heb. *went*.—*b* Verses 32, 38.

festly to place the miracle about to be wrought beyond all question.

**35. He filled the trench also**—But in that time of terrible drought where could Elijah obtain such an amount of water? Some think from the neighbouring sea; but that was several miles distant from the traditional spot. Others think it might have been taken from the fountain near the spot which most travellers mention; but Thomson says that was nearly dry when he was there, and could not hold out through the dry season of one ordinary summer. More likely the water was brought from the "brook Kishon," where Elijah slew the false prophets. Verse 40. This flows close along the base of Carmel, and here is one of the largest perennial sources of that ancient river. "The strictly permanent Kishon is one of the shortest rivers in the world. You will find the source in the vast fountains called *Saadiyeh*, not more than three miles east of Haifa. They flow out from the very roots of Carmel, almost on a level with the sea, and the water is brackish. They form a deep broad stream at once, which creeps sluggishly through an impracticable marsh to the sea."—*Thomson*. We need not suppose that the water was brought at this particular time, and that Elijah and the people waited by the altar while the carriers brought it from the Kishon, or even from the neighbouring fountain. We naturally suppose that in view of what would be needed, the necessary supply of water had been provided in the early part of the day.

**36. At the time of . . . evening sacrifice**—See note on verse 29. We may render, *at the offering of the sacrifice*, that is, when all the preparations had been made, and all things were ready for the offering of the sacrifice. The preparations of Elijah in building an altar, digging the trench, and prepar-

came near, and said, LORD "God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, <sup>a</sup>let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that* I *am* thy servant, and *that* "I have done all these things at thy word. **37** Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again. **38** Then <sup>c</sup>the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and

<sup>c</sup> Exodus 3. 6.—<sup>d</sup> Chapter 8. 43; 2 Kings 19. 19; Psalm 83. 18.—<sup>e</sup> Numbers 16. 28.—<sup>f</sup> Leviticus 9. 24; Judges 6. 21; 1 Chronicles

the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench. **39** And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, "The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God. **40** And Elijah said unto them, <sup>17h</sup>Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and <sup>1</sup>slew them there.

21. 26; 2 Chronicles 7. 1.—<sup>g</sup> Verse 24.—<sup>17 Or.</sup> *Apprehend.*—<sup>h</sup> 2 Kings 10. 25.—<sup>i</sup> Deuteronomy 13. 5; 18. 20.

ing for the sacrifice need not have occupied a great deal of time, for verses 30, 33, 34, show that he had the people around him at command, and multitudes were doubtless ready to render him any assistance he desired. **God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel**—Thus he turns the heart of the children to the fathers. Mal. iv. 6. Contrast the simplicity of his prayer with the frantic cries and orgies of the prophets of Baal.

**37. Thou hast turned their heart back again**—Back again from idols to thyself. The prophet thus anticipates the results of this contest, and thinks of the people as already reclaimed from their idolatrous practices.

**38. The fire of the Lord fell**—See marginal references. This miraculous fire descended from heaven in flaming proof that it was no result of fraudulent practice. Chrysostom says he was personally knowing to fraudulent practices of idolaters whereby fire was kindled on the altar by means of a concealed excavation underneath; and an old tradition says that these priests of Baal had a man hidden under their altar on Carmel, but he was suffocated before he could kindle the fire. "There is an exultant triumph in the words in which the sacred historian describes the completeness of the conflagration. The fragments of the ox on the summit of the altar first disappear; then the pile of wood, heaped from the forests of Carmel; next the very stones of the altar crumble in the flames; then the very dust of the earth that had been thrown out of the trench; and lastly, the water in the trench round the altar is licked up by the fiery tongues, and leaves the whole place bare."—Stanley.

**39. Fell on their faces**—Overwhelmed with the convincing display of Divine power and glory. **The Lord, he is the God**—Better, *Jehovah, he is the God!* The God; that is, the only God, for Baal had failed to prove himself a god at all.

**40. Take the prophets of Baal**—Take them prisoners; lay hold upon them as criminals worthy of immediate death. The order was addressed to the obedient multitude, now all enthusiasm to vindicate Jehovah's honour. **Down to the brook Kishon**—Which flows along the very base of Carmel. See note on verse 35. "With regard to the place where the slaughter took place, there is general agreement. The path down the mountain, after passing the fountain, . . . continues with no great windings almost directly towards Tell Kussis, a commanding hill on the opposite side of the Kishon, but very near it. It is a spur from the hills which bound the plain of Esdraelon on the north, close by where the plain contracts into the narrow valley which connects it with the plain of Akka. Its name, signifying *hill of the priests*, is not improbably derived from the fact of the slaughter of the prophets of Baal, which must have taken place near it."

—PROF. MEAD, in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1873, p. 685. **Slew them there**—Here we may see some retaliation for Jezebel's slaughter of the prophets of Jehovah. See verse 4. But we must not judge this act of Elijah on the principles of Christian ethics, but by the spirit and letter of the Mosaic economy. The law commanded that the devotees of idolatry should be punished with death. See Deut. xiii, 1-15;

**41** And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* <sup>18</sup> a sound of abundance of rain. **42** So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; <sup>19</sup> and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, **43** And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he

18 Or, *a sound of a noise of rain.*  
k James 5. 17, 18.

xvii, 2-4; xviii, 20. And so great was the passion with which the people, at the order of Elijah, helped to execute the law in this case, that Ahab, who was present, had no power or apparent disposition to interfere. On the moral principle involved in this slaughter of the Baal prophets, see notes on chap. ii, 24; 2 Sam. xii, 31.

#### THE GREAT STORM, 41-46.

**41. Eat and drink**—On the mountain, near the place of the contest, probably a great feast was spread, and had been waiting some time the result of the conflict. During the protracted and exciting contest of the day there had been no time and no disposition to partake of food. **A sound of abundance of rain**—Literally, *A voice of a splash of rain.* The prophet heard it in his inner ear; a prophetic presentment of sound.

**42. Cast himself down**—Elijah's attitude in prayer has been understood in two ways. Some maintain that he placed himself in a sitting posture, thus bringing his knees near his chin, and making it comparatively easy for him to **put his face between his knees.** Chardin and Shaw observed certain Orientals in this posture while engaged in devout meditation. This attitude, however, though suitable for meditation, would be less appropriate for prayer. Others therefore think that he first kneeled down, and then bowed his head forward, so that his face would have been brought near to the ground, and may have even touched it. This latter view is favoured by the word יָנַח, here rendered *cast himself*

*down*, which implies *prostration*, not *sitting*. The word occurs again only

went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, 'Go again seven times. **44** And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, <sup>19</sup> Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. **45** And it came to pass in the mean

2 Gen. 32. 26; Hab. 2. 3; Luke 18. 7; Eph. 6. 18; Heb. 10. 37.—19 Heb. *Tie, or, Bind.*

in 2 Kings iv, 34, 35, where it is used of Elisha's stretching himself upon the dead child of the Shunammite. This prostrate attitude of Elijah's was in keeping with that earnestness in prayer of which St. James speaks. James v, 17. Both king and prophet returned **to the top of Carmel**, the one to feast, the other to pray. The prophet, "while he was praying, withdrew himself from the very highest point of the summit, leaving Ahab to take his meal at the place where the sacrifice had been consumed. Elijah needed to retire only a short distance to the west, and there, on the slope just below the summit, sequestered by bushes and trees, such as are still to be found there, poured out his petitions for rain."—*Mead.*

**43. His servant**—Tradition says it was the Zidonian widow's son whom he had raised from the dead. See note on chap. xvii, 23. **Go up now**—To the eminence just above him, whence, over the western ridge, may be seen a wide view of the Mediterranean Sea. **Seven times**—"Here was an act of faith on Elijah's part, and on that of his servant, and also a prophecy. The cloud, which promised the long-expected rain, appeared at the seventh time. The walls of Jericho fell down after they had been compassed seven times, on the seventh day. Josh. vi, 15-20. Naaman was cleansed after he had washed seven times. 2 Kings v, 14. There are seventy-seven generations from Adam to Christ."—*Wordsworth.*

**44. Go up, say unto Ahab**—The king was yet on the lofty summit; the prophet still remained in his nook of prayer. **That the rain stop thee not**—By causing the streams to rise so suddenly, and to such a degree, as to prevent all crossing.

while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. **46** The hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he <sup>m</sup> girded up his loins,

*m* 2 Kings 4. 29; 9. 1.

**45. Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel**—A distance of about twelve miles. The site of Jezreel is preserved in the modern village *Zerin*, which occupies a noble site on the western point of Mount Gilboa, about one hundred feet above the plain, and commands a wide view of the surrounding country. It is first mentioned in Josh. xix, 18, as belonging to the tribe of Issachar, but its chief fame is in its association with Ahab, who made it his royal residence. It did not supersede Samaria, but here Ahab built a palace, (chap. xxi, 1,) and it was the summer residence of his dynasty for three successive reigns.

**46. Hand of the Lord was on Elijah**—He was in the Spirit, and he and all around him were conscious that the mighty power of God was with him. **Girded up his loins**—Twisted the leather garment which he wore (2 Kings i, 8) tightly about him, that he might run more freely. **Ran before Ahab**—"As the Bedouins of his native Gilead would still run, with inexhaustible strength." "The mode of doing honour to Ahab by running before his chariot was in accordance with the customs of the East, even to this day. I was reminded of this incident when Mohammed Ali, with a large army, came to Jaffa to quell the rebellion of Palestine. The officers were constantly going or coming, preceded by runners, who always kept just in advance of the horses, however furiously they were ridden; and in

and ran before Ahab <sup>20</sup> to the entrance of Jezreel.

### CHAPTER XIX.

**A**ND Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and withal how

*20* Heb. *till thou come to Jezreel.*

order to run with greater ease, they not only girded their loins very tightly, but also tucked up their loose garments under the girdle, lest they should be incommoded by them. Thus, no doubt, did Elijah. The distance from the base of Carmel across the plain to Jezreel is not less than twelve miles, and the race was probably accomplished in two hours in the face of a tremendous storm of rain and wind."—*Thomson*. This "running" was a humble and servant-like act on the part of Elijah, and was probably done to convince Ahab that the stern and fiery-spirited prophet, whom he had so much hated, was a faithful and obedient subject, having no desire to injure the king or his people, but zealous to defend the honour and worship of the God of their fathers.

### CHAPTER XIX.

ELIJAH'S FLIGHT TO HOREB, 1-18.

**1. Ahab told Jezebel**—The king was probably drawn towards Elijah in sympathy, and believed him to be a holy man of God. The mighty works



he had <sup>a</sup> slain all the prophets with the sword. **2** Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, <sup>b</sup> So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time. **3** And when he saw *that*, he arose, and

went for his life, and came to Beersheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant there. **4** But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he <sup>c</sup> requested <sup>1</sup> for himself that he might die; and said, It

a Chap. 18. 40.—<sup>b</sup> Ruth 1. 17; chap. 20. 10;  
2 Kings 6. 31.

c Num. 11. 15; Jonah 4. 3, 8.—<sup>1</sup> Heb.  
*for his life.*

of Divine power at Carmel, which his own eyes had witnessed, had convinced him that Jehovah was God, and Baal was no god worthy of respect. He might have thought to convince Jezebel of this by relating **all that Elijah had done**, but the wondrous tale only provoked the spirit of the idolatrous queen to the fiercest vows of revenge.

**2. Jezebel sent a messenger**—Here was lack of shrewdness and forethought, if she really wished and designed to carry out her threat, for such announcement of her purpose gave Elijah full opportunity to escape her, or prepare to meet her opposition. But it is possible that her object was to terrify him and drive him away from her city, and that she feared to cope with him otherwise, lest her own fate should be like that of the false prophets. **So let the gods do**—"One of those tremendous vows which mark the history of the Semitic race, both within and without the Jewish pale—the vow of Jephthah, the vow of Saul, the vow of Hannibal."—*Stanley*.

**3. When he saw**—Saw how things stood; saw the storm coming because of Ahab's instability and lack of moral courage and firm principle to rule his house, and silence the rage of Jezebel. **He arose, and went for his life**—Strange spectacle! the man at whose word but yesterday the fire of Jehovah miraculously fell, and four hundred and fifty false prophets were slain, now flies for his life before the threat of an idolatrous queen! Jehovah seems to have left him for a season to himself. Perhaps there was danger that, like the apostle, he might become exalted above measure by the abundance of revelations and of power which were manifested through him, (2 Cor. xii. 7,) and it was needful to remind him by an impressive experience that he was

still a man encompassed with human passions and infirmities. To many it may seem that a great opportunity to reform the worship of the kingdom was lost by Elijah's flight. The people were convinced. Ahab was awed to reverent silence and submission. Only Jezebel and her Asherah priests seem to have remained an obstacle in the way of reform; and how easily might they have been removed by the Divine power which had already wrought such wonders! So we might judge. But there is a point beyond which Divine power will not multiply miracles, and the turning-point here was the instability of Ahab. He had the power, and ought to have shown the courage, to silence the ravings of his impious wife, and to command his household and the whole kingdom to keep the way of the Lord. But he was governed by his wife, became false to his deepest convictions of truth, and Jehovah would proceed no further at that time to magnify his name. But the moral lessons of the scene at Carmel have never been lost. Though failing to reform the king and the nation, they speak to every after age, and form a part of that Divine revelation which claims the admiration and reverence of all that desire to know and worship the true God. **Beersheba**—The southern extremity of the Promised Land, and the home of the patriarchs. **Which belongeth to Judah**—It was originally assigned to the tribe of Simeon, (Josh. xix. 2;) whence it appears that the tribe had now become largely absorbed in the tribe of Judah. **Left his servant**—He would be entirely alone; and in that utter solitude to which he fled, in which he might suffer hunger and many dangers, he wished to have no partaker of his sufferings.

**4 A juniper tree**—"A species of

is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers. **5** And as he lay and slept under a juniper tree, behold, then <sup>a</sup>an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise and eat. **6** And he looked, and, behold, *there was* a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his <sup>2</sup>head. And he did eat and

drink, and laid him down again. **7** And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; <sup>e</sup>because the journey is too great for thee. **8** And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat <sup>f</sup>forty days and forty nights unto <sup>g</sup>Horeb the mount of

<sup>d</sup> Psa. 34. 7, 10; Dan. 9. 21; 10. 9, 10; Acts 12. 7. <sup>2</sup> Heb. *bolster*.

<sup>e</sup> Deut. 33. 25; Psa. 103. 13, 14. — <sup>f</sup> So Exod. 34. 28; Deut. 9. 9, 18; Matt. 4. 2. — <sup>g</sup> Exod. 3. 1.

the broom plant, *Genista roetam* of Forsk. The Hebrew name רֹתֶם, *rothem*, is the same as the present Arabic name. The Vulgate, Luther, English Version, and others, translate it wrongly by *juniper*. It is the largest and most conspicuous shrub of the deserts of Sinai, growing thickly in the watercourses and valleys. The roots are very bitter, and are regarded by the Arabs as yielding the best charcoal. This illustrates Job xxx, 4, and Psa. cxx, 4. Our Arabs always selected the place of encampment, if possible, in a spot where it grew, in order to be sheltered by it at night from the wind; and during the day, when they often went on in advance of the camels, we found them not unfrequently sitting or sleeping under a bush of *rotem* to protect them from the sun."—*Robinson*.

**Requested for himself that he might die**—Literally, *besought his soul to die*. See note on chap. xvii, 22. **It is enough**—I have lived long enough and seen sorrows enough. From this some infer that Elijah was now advanced in years. **Take away my life**—"Strange contradiction," says Kitto. "Here the man who was destined not to taste of death flees from death on the one hand, and seeks it on the other." **Not better than my fathers**—With all the Divine power and glory revealed in me, I am still as fallible and weak as they, and deserve to live no longer.

**5. An angel touched him**—Though his flight into the desert was not authorized by any Divine command, like that which sent him to the brook Cherith or to Zarephath, still the angel of the Lord guards him in the way. Jehovah has not yet done with him, and he miraculously cares for him as he did for Jonah when he fled from duty.

**6. A cake baken on the coals**—Baked after the manner still common in the East, on smooth stones heated by coals of fire. Whether these provisions were prepared immediately by the angel, or by some traveller whom God led that way, we need not discuss, for either was possible. He who commanded the ravens to feed this prophet at the brook Cherith, might easily have put it into the heart of some passing Arab to leave the cake and the cruse of water at his head as he slept under the *rothem* shrub.

**7. The journey is too great for thee**—Too long for thee to accomplish without the nourishment of this God-given food. It is likely that Elijah commenced the desert journey with the purpose of going to Mount Horeb, but after the wearisome travel of a day he lay down despairing and exhausted, and wished to die. Then was given Divine help to finish his journey, for amid the sacred solitudes of Horeb God would teach him a lesson not to be forgotten.

**8. Forty days and forty nights**—He was miraculously sustained. On the same mountain Moses had twice fasted this same length of time, (Exod. xxiv, 18, xxxiv, 28,) and in another wilderness Jesus did the same. Matt. iv, 2. "Elijah stands," says Wordsworth, "at a middle point between Moses and Christ. He looks back to the law and forward to the Gospel. He restores the one and prepares the way for the other. He hears an echo of the terrors of the law in the wind, the earthquake, and the fire; he hears the far-off whispers of love in the Gospel in the still small voice." **Horeb the mount of God**—See on Exod. iii, 1. It is remarkable that after the giving of the law there is no account of any Jew visiting this holy mount except Elijah

God. <sup>9</sup> And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the Lord *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah? <sup>10</sup> And he said, <sup>h</sup> I have been very <sup>i</sup> jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and <sup>k</sup> slain thy prophets with the sword;

<sup>k</sup> Rom. 11. 3.—<sup>i</sup> Num. 25. 11, 13; Psa. 69. 9.  
<sup>k</sup> Chap. 18. 4.

**9. Unto a cave**—Hebrew, *unto the cave*. "There is nothing to confirm, but there is nothing to contradict, the belief [of the Arabs] that it may have been in that secluded basin which has long been pointed out as the spot, beneath the summit of what is called 'the Mount of Moses.' The granite rocks enclose it on every side, as though it were a natural sanctuary. No scene could have been more suitable for the vision which follows."—*Stanley*. **What doest thou here, Elijah**—Literally, *What is to thee here?* That is, what is thy business here? Why hast thou left Israel, to whom I sent thee, and come to these mountains? How these words remind one of the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden of Eden and crying among the trees, "Adam, where art thou?" Gen. iii, 8, 9. It is, wherever uttered, the voice of the Spirit that convinces and reproves the world of sin, and of the love that chastens to reform.

**10. I have been very jealous**—Zealously avenging Jehovah's honour by slaying those who have brought idolatry into Israel, and thus imitating the zeal of Phinehas the son of Eleazar. Num. xxv, 1-13. This answer of Elijah betrays in him what some have called a "spirit of pious faultfinding," and also a disposition to exalt himself above measure. He does not accuse Jehovah, but his words imply that he himself was the only saint in Israel, and it was too bad that Divine power had allowed idolatry so far to triumph. Elijah's notions of the Divine government were manifestly shaped too much by external displays of awful power, and he needed to learn a profounder lesson of the Divine nature. This we must observe in order to understand

and <sup>l</sup> I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. <sup>11</sup> And he said, Go forth, and stand <sup>m</sup> upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and <sup>n</sup> a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; *but* the Lord *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earth-

<sup>l</sup> Chap. 18. 22; Rom. 11. 3.—<sup>m</sup> Exod. 24. 12.  
<sup>n</sup> Ezek. 1. 4; 87. 7.

the significance of the symbolical events that follow.

**11. Go forth, and stand upon the mount**—In order that, by impressive signs and symbols, I may teach thee a truer lesson of my nature and government, and send thee back to Israel a wiser man, a profounder prophet of my word, to finish the work I have for thee to do. **The Lord passed by**—As he did by Moses in these same solitudes. Compare Exod. xxxiii, 21-23, xxxiv, 6. This whole scene that follows is largely a reproduction of what occurred to Moses, perhaps in the cleft of this same rocky cave, and the two ought to be compared together. When Moses saw the calf-worship his "anger waxed hot," and he broke the tables of the law, and ground the golden calf to powder, and, **as** Elijah slew the Baal prophets, he slew three thousand men that day. Exod. xxxii, 19-28. Then in his anguish and discouragement he prayed, "Forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me out of thy book," (verse 32,) and Jehovah condescended to make his glory and his goodness pass before him. He first awes Elijah by a fearful display of force. **A great and strong wind**—A tremendous hurricane. **Rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks**—Literally, *tearing up the mountains and shivering the rocks*. This is sometimes partially done by an ordinary wind storm among the awful crags of the Sinaitic mountains, and even then the spectacle is fearfully sublime. **The Lord was not in the wind**—He was neither in the wind, the earthquake, nor the fire, in the sense in which he was in the "still small voice." There was a sense in which he was in them all. They came and shook the mountains at his

quake; *but* the LORD was not in the earthquake: **12** And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire <sup>a</sup> a still small voice. **13** And it was *so*, when Elijah heard *it*, that <sup>p</sup> he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. <sup>q</sup> And, behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?

<sup>a</sup> Exod. 34. 6; Job 4. 16; 33. 7; Zech. 4. 6.

<sup>p</sup> So Exod. 3. 6; Isa. 6. 2.

command; they were symbols of his mighty power. But there was a revelation of the Divine nature which God would now give to Elijah which these symbols could not convey, and in this sense Jehovah was not in them.

**12. After the earthquake a fire—**The whole mount quaked greatly, as in the days of Moses, (Exod. xix, 18,) and the earthquake shock was followed now, as then, by the fiery glare of eastern lightning. Exod. xix, 16, 18, xx, 18. **A still small voice—**Literally, *A voice of a light stillness*. Septuagint, *Voice of a gentle breeze*. Whether this was an articulate voice, or the sound of the soft wind that usually follows a storm among the mountains, it was in either case symbolical. It was something which Elijah heard and understood as a prelude to some further revelation. See exposition of these symbols under verse 18.

**13. Wrapped his face in his mantle—**Conscious of his infirmities and shortcomings, he was, like Moses, "afraid to look upon God." Exod. iii, 6. He began to realize that as yet he knew comparatively little of the Divine nature and will. **There came a voice unto him—**It was the voice of Jehovah; perhaps the same as that whose soft whisper followed the lightning flash; but, if so, it now rose to a clearer and more intelligible sound. **What doest thou here—**The Lord's question and the prophet's answer are repeated (compare verse 9) in order to deepen the impression of the scene. The repetition also shows Elijah still presuming to justify his flight. He was guilty of **no wilful sin**. His error was not one of the heart, but of the understanding; and his flight to Horeb,

**14** <sup>r</sup> And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. **15** And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: <sup>s</sup> and when thou comest,

<sup>q</sup> Verse 9.—<sup>r</sup> Verse 10; Isa. 62. 1, 6. <sup>s</sup> 2 Kings 8. 12, 13.

though not blameless, was largely the result of disappointment and discouragement. He had, indeed, been very zealous for the Lord, and had expected too much from the triumph at Carmel. Jehovah proceeds to show him there are other ways of taking off the wicked than by miraculous interference.

**15. Return on thy way—**Go forth into the fields of labour where my Spirit shall hereafter lead thee, and let my Spirit, not thy frail judgment, guide thee. **To the wilderness of Damascus—**The wild country between Gilead and Damascus is probably meant. This was near Elijah's early home, (see note on chapter xvii, 1,) and a place whence he might easily go forth to utter the word of God to either Israelite or Syrian, and again quickly retire into solitude. The wilderness near where Israel's and Jehovah's interests are pending, not the wilderness of Horeb, is now the place where the prophet is needed. There must be instruct Elisha and other prophets in the revelations of the Divine nature which he has received. **When thou comest, anoint Hazael—**Rather, (for these verbs are not in the imperative, like *Go* and *Return*,) *and thou wilt come and anoint Hazael*. It is the word of the Lord foretelling the agencies by which the wicked house of Ahab shall be destroyed. We know not that Elijah ever saw or anointed Hazael or Jehu, though he may have done so privately, as Samuel did Saul, (1 Sam. ix, 27, x, 1,) and no account of it have been preserved. But **as** this was actually done by Elisha (who was anointed prophet in Elijah's room, verse 16) and another prophet whom Elisha, in turn, commissioned, the spirit and real import of

anoint Hazael to be king over Syria: **16** And 'Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and 'Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy room. **17** And 'it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword

*†* 2 Kings 9. 1-3. — *u* Luke 4. 27, *Elishus*. — *v* 2 Kings 8. 12; 9. 14, &c.; 10. 6, &c.; 13. 3.

this prediction was thoroughly fulfilled. 2 Kings viii, 10-13, and ix, 1-7. This fulfilment by Elisha instead of Elijah was specially significant in this case, since it was partly the design of this communication at Horeb to indicate to Elijah, and through him to all who read this history, how manifold may be the agencies which accomplish the Divine purposes. Hence, too, Jehovah speaks in these words not to Elijah only, but also to his successors in office.

**16. Jehu the son of Nimshi**—See the fulfilment of this prophecy in 2 Kings ix, 1-10. **Abel-meholah**—A place in the Jordan valley not yet certainly identified with any modern town, but probably in the plain south of Bethshean. Here Gideon and his three hundred pursued the flying Midianites. Judges vii, 22.

**17. Hazael . . . Jehu . . . Elisha**—These are to be the ministers of Divine vengeance against the house of Ahab—the swords of a Jew and a Gentile king, and the word of Elijah's successor. Around these three names cluster the destinies of Israel for a whole generation, and hence their significance in this revelation to Elijah.

**18. I have left me seven thousand**—Better, as in the margin, *I will leave seven thousand in Israel*. That is, in the judgments that are to come by the hand of the ministers I have named, all Israel shall not be cut off. There will be found seven thousand who have never worshipped Baal. Here Elijah learns, to his confusion, that he is not the only Israelite who remains true to God. As seven is the covenant number, the number of perfection, the seven thousand need not be pressed here to mean an exact designation of the number of true worshippers of God in Israel, but a round number ever symbolical of the elect of God. So the apostle (Rom.

of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu 'shall Elisha slay. **18** \*Yet 'I have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, 'and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

*w* See Hosea 6. 5. — *x* Rom. 11. 4. — *3* Or, *I will leave*. — *y* See Hosea 13. 2.

xi, 4) uses it of that "remnant according to the election of grace," the true Israel that embraced the saving truth of Christ. So, too, in all the history of the Church—in the darkest times of apostasy—the Lord reserves to himself his faithful seven thousand, though for a time they be driven by persecution into the wilderness, or into caves and dens of the earth. **Kissed him**—It was an ancient practice to adore idols both by kissing them and kissing the hand at them. Compare Hos. xiii, 2.

The lessons Elijah learned at Horeb were full of instruction. The symbols of wind, earthquake, and fire, followed by the still small voice, have a wide and varied significance and application.

The central lesson of these symbols is, that there are mightier influences at work in human history than *physical force*. Men are ever prone to think otherwise, or, at least, to disregard this fact. That which is tangible to the outer senses—which blows and shakes and burns before the eyes of men, confounding and confusing, and, for the time, overwhelming and crushing all opposition—that is too apt to exhaust all our ideas of mightiness. We should, therefore, be reminded that in the silent workings of mind and heart there are often developed forces stronger than the whirlwind, mightier than the earthquake shock, and fiercer in their burnings than fires which many waters cannot quench. In this we may discover just the relation of miracles to the truth which they have often served to introduce or confirm. We are in danger of esteeming the former above the latter, whereas the law and the prophets and Christ have taught a different lesson. The seven thousand devout hearts in Israel are a mightier power for good than even all the miracles of Elijah. So, too, Jesus taught his disciples that

19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was

ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth: and

it is better to have one's name written in heaven than to have power to work miracles, (Luke x, 20,) and that the true believer, led by the Spirit, shall do even greater works than the Messiah.

The immediate application of this lesson was to Elijah's undue estimate of the miracles at Carmel. He seems to have supposed that the answer by fire that consumed his sacrifice, and the mighty wind and rain that came so quickly after, together with the slaughter of the false prophets, would accomplish the speedy reformation of Israel; and because they did not, he yielded to discouragement and despair. His radical error was in placing too much confidence in the outward and the marvellous. So the still small voice, as it developed itself into the sure word of prophecy, showed him how groundless was his despair, how mistaken his notions of Jehovah's ways, and how manifold might be other agencies of judgment yet at God's command.

At the same time the lesson might remind him that the impious Jezebel from whom he fled, and who now, after all his work against her gods, seemed to be triumphant still, was trusting in the outward appearance of power at her command. She might array against him and his fellow-prophets all the forces of government, and all the pomp and pretensions of the idolatry to which she was devoted, but these would soon exhaust themselves, for God would not be in them. The wind and fire of her presumptuous wrath would soon pass by, and after all its fury was spent, there would rise the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal: a silent force, perchance, but with God in them mightier far than all that could come against them.

But the deeper and grander lesson of these symbols is the contrast they present between the old dispensation and the new—the Law and the Gospel. The miracles of the exodus, the clouds and thunders and lightnings that attended the giving of the law at this same Sinai, and all the later marvels in



the sacred history of Israel, only prepared the ear of men to catch more readily and appreciate more fully the gentle voice of Him who did not cry or lift up his voice in the streets, but still spake as no other man spake. The sweetest, holiest sound that ever steals upon the soul of man is the voice of the Word that was made flesh; and that voice, ever speaking in the Gospel, shall go forth throughout the earth, and its words unto the end of the world, until all idols fall, and all tongues confess, that Jesus is the Christ.

CALL OF ELISHA,  
19-21.

19. **Departed thence**—Left the wilderness of Horeb to go to the wilderness of Damascus. Ver. 15. **Ploughing with twelve yoke of ... before him**—That is, ploughing in company with eleven other men who each had a plough and a yoke of oxen. This is still common in the East. It is not necessary to suppose, as

Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. **20** And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, "Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow thee. And he said unto him, "Go back again: for what have I done to thee? **21** And

z Matt. 8, 21, 22; Luke 9, 61, 62.

many have done, that Elisha owned all the oxen, and that the men were merely his servants. Dr. Thomson speaks of seeing more than a dozen ploughs following one another as closely as possible. "To understand the reason of this," he says, "several things must be taken into account. First, that the arable lands of nearly all villages are cultivated in common; then, that Arab farmers delight to work together in companies, partly for mutual protection, and in part from their love of gossip; and as they sow no more ground than they can plough during the day, one sower will answer for the entire company. Their little ploughs make no proper furrow, but merely root up and throw the soil on either side, and so any number may follow one another, and when at the end of the field, they can return along the same line, and thus back and forth until the whole is ploughed." **He with the twelfth**—"It is well that Elisha came the last of the twelve, for the act of Elijah would have stopped all that were in advance of him." **Elijah passed by him**—Rather, *passed over to him*. Perhaps he passed over the Jordan, having been journeying on the opposite shore. **Cast his mantle upon him**—This was a symbolical act on the part of Elijah, investing Elisha with his own prophetic office. The sign was understood and the call obeyed.

**20. Ran after Elijah**—Elijah, as he cast his mantle on Elisha, walked rapidly away, and this was as much as to say, "Follow me." **Let me... kiss my father and my mother**—Elisha was at this time a young man, living with his parents, and probably unmarried. Like others who have been called with a holy calling, his heart yearns for his home and his kindred. Compare Matt. viii, 21; Luke ix, 61. **Go back again: for what have I done to thee**—There

he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and \*boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

4 Heb. *Go return*.—a 2 Sam. 24, 22.

is something uncertain and mysterious about these words. Here is no clear permission to go and kiss his parents farewell, and whether he did so or not is an unsettled question. Elijah would throw the whole responsibility of the matter on the conscience of Elisha. "Go home and stay there, if you have such desire; and as regards your duty in view of what I have done to you, settle that matter yourself."

**21. He returned back from him**—But not, so far as we can learn, to kiss his father and mother. He went back to the spot where he had left his oxen, and made there a feast. **Took a yoke of oxen**—Rather, *the yoke of oxen*; that is, the yoke with which he had been ploughing, and which was probably all that belonged to him. **The instruments of the oxen**—The yoke and the plough used with the oxen. With these instruments he made the fire to cook the flesh. Compare the like use of instruments on Araunah's threshingfloor, 2 Sam. xxiv, 22. **Gave unto the people**—What people? Doubtless his fellow-workmen in that field, and all in the same vicinity that could be readily summoned. Whether this field was near Elisha's home, or whether his parents were present at this feast, does not appear. But this act of Elisha was a public declaration to the people that he now left his secular employment to become a prophet of Jehovah. **Went after Elijah**—Who had gone slowly onward, or perhaps had lingered waiting for him in the distance. **Ministered unto him**—Became his constant attendant and servant in place of the young man whom he had dismissed when he fled into the wilderness of Horeb. Verse 3. He was afterward known and spoken of as "Elisha, the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah." 2 Kings iii, 11.

## CHAPTER XX.

**A**ND <sup>a</sup>Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his hosts together: and there were thirty and two kings with him, and horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it. **2** And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith Ben-hadad, **1** Thy <sup>b</sup>silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine. **4** And the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to thy saying, <sup>c</sup>I am thine, and all that I have. **5** And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children; **6** Yet I will send my servants unto thee to morrow about this time, and they shall search thine house, and the

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 15. 18, 20; 2 Kings 8. 7, 10; 2 Chron. 16. 2, 4; Jer. 49. 27.—<sup>b</sup> Exod. 15. 9; Isa. 10. 13, 14.—<sup>c</sup> Lev. 26. 36; Deut. 28. 48; Judg. 15. 11, 13; 1 Sam. 13. 6, 7; 2 Kings 18. 14, 16.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 13. 19, 21; 2 Sam. 24. 14; 2 Kings 18. 31, 32.

## CHAPTER XX.

BENHADAD'S WARS AGAINST AHAB,  
1-34.

**1. Ben-hadad the king of Syria**—He reigned at Damascus, and was probably son of the king of the same name whom Asa hired with the treasures of the temple to smite the cities of Israel, and trouble king Baasha. Chap. xv, 18-20. **Thirty and two kings**—Not confederate kings of neighbouring independent nations, but vassal kings, or lords of single cities and their surrounding country, which were tributary to Ben-hadad. Verse 24 shows the power and authority Ben-hadad wielded over them. **Horses and chariots**—Many of the latter had probably been obtained from Egypt in the days of Solomon. Chap. x, 29.

**3. Thy silver and thy gold is mine**—This demand was somewhat ambiguous and uncertain, and Ahab seems to have understood it as merely a proposition of Ben-hadad to raise the siege and go away from Samaria on condition of receiving certain amounts of gold and silver, and the goodliest of his wives and children, leaving Ahab to make the selection.

houses of thy servants; and it shall be, that whatsoever is pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away. **7** Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this man <sup>e</sup>seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold; and <sup>f</sup>I denied him not. **8** And all the elders and all the people said unto him, Hearken not unto him, nor consent. **9** Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the messengers departed, and brought him word again. **10** And Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that <sup>g</sup>follow me. **11** And

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *desirable*.—<sup>e</sup> Job 15. 35; Psalm 7. 14; 31. 4; Proverbs 6. 14; Daniel 11. 27.—<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *I kept not back from him*.—<sup>f</sup> Chapter 19. 2.—<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *are at my feet*; so Exodus 11. 8; Judges 4. 10.

**4. I am thine, and all that I have**—He pusillanimously agrees to make himself and his whole kingdom tributary to Ben-hadad.

**5. The messengers came again**—Either Ahab has misunderstood the meaning of his former message, or else the king of Syria is emboldened by the pusillanimity of Ahab to make a stronger demand.

**6. I will send my servants**—To this humiliation Ahab will not submit. He will allow no searching of his palace and his city by foreign emissaries, and no violent seizure of any of his goods, for this would be the same as to let the enemy come in and freely plunder all Samaria.

**7. Seeketh mischief**—Has his heart set on bringing disastrous evils on this kingdom.

**10. If the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls**—That is, I will bring such a host that all the dust of the city of Samaria will not be sufficient to give each soldier a handful. This threat involved the idea of reducing the entire city to dust and ashes. Some have incorrectly taken *שְׁעָלִים*, *handfuls*, to mean *soles of the feet*, and have ex

the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off. **12** And it came to pass, when Ben-hadad heard this message, as he was drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions, that he said unto his servants, *Set yourselves in array.* And they set themselves in array against the city. **13** And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this

4 Heb. word.—a Verse 16.—5 Or, tents.—6 Or, Place the engines. And they placed engines.—7 Heb. approached.—b Verse 28.

plained: The dust of Samaria will not be sufficient room for the soles of the feet of the multitude of soldiers. Josephus explains it that Ben-hadad threatened to bring so vast an army that, by only each man of his army taking a handful of earth, they would raise a mound higher than the walls of Samaria. But this has no support in the Scripture text.

**11. Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast**—This is a proverb whose force and aptness in this case was clear. Thus the Romans say:

"Sing not the triumphal song before the victory." Our translators supply harness where, perhaps, armour would be a better word, and better still to supply nothing, but render: *Let not him that girds himself boast like one that ungirds.* The military girdle is frequently alluded to in Scripture, and its use is shown in the annexed cut. It was not a mere sword-sash, but served also both to sustain and defend the body.

**12. Pavilions**—War tents, covered either with canvass or with the boughs of trees.

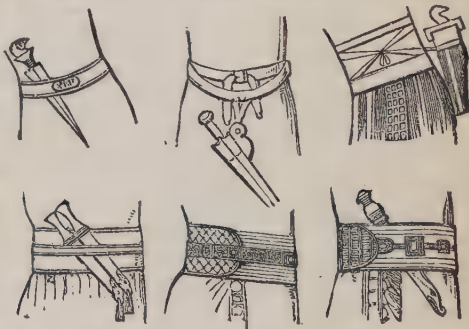
**13. There came a prophet**—From one of the schools of the prophets, sent, probably, by Elijah. Compare verse 35.

**14. Young men of the princes of the provinces**—These princes of the

day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord. **14** And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the Lord, *Even* by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he answered, Thou. **15** Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, *even* all the children of Israel, *being* seven thousand. **16** And they went out at noon. But Ben-hadad was drinking himself drunk in the

8 Or, servants.—9 Heb. bind, or, tie.—10 Judges 7. 7, 16; 1 Sam. 14. 6; 2 Chron. 14. 11.—k Verse 11; chap. 16. 9; Hosea 14. 11.

provinces were the local governors of the several districts in the kingdom, who had been called into Samaria by order of the king to help defend the city against Ben-hadad. Their young men were their servants or attendants. Jehovah will show Ahab, and also Ben-hadad, that "the battle is not to the strong," and these two hundred and thirty-two youths shall be mightier than the boasted numbers of the king of Syria. **Who shall order the battle**—Literally, *Who shall bind on the battle?* That is, Who shall begin the fight?



**15. Seven thousand**—Some have supposed that these were the seven thousand that had not bowed the knee to Baal. Chap. xix, 18. That, however, can only be regarded as a pleasing conjecture. Keil thinks that in both places seven thousand denotes the whole covenant people, but with this distinction, that in chap. xix, 18

pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two kings that helped him. **17** And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and they told him, saying, 'There are men come out of Samaria. **18** And he said, 'Whether they be come out for peace, take them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them alive. **19** So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them. **20** And <sup>m</sup>they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the horsemen. **21** And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. **22** And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: <sup>n</sup>for at the

return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee. **23** And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him, <sup>o</sup>Their gods are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. **24** And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of his place, and put captains in their rooms: **25** And number thee an army, like the army <sup>10</sup>that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so. **26** And it came to pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to <sup>p</sup>Aphek, <sup>11</sup>to fight against Israel. **27** And the children of Israel were numbered, and <sup>12</sup>were all present, and went against them: and the children

<sup>71</sup> Samuel 2. 3, 4; 14. 11, 12; 17. 44; 2 Kings 14. 8, 12; Proverbs 18. 12.—<sup>m</sup> 2 Samuel 2. 16; Eccles. 9. 11.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Samuel 11. 1.—<sup>o</sup> Chapter 14. 23; 1 Samuel 4. 8; 2 Kings 19. 12; 2 Chroni-

cles 32. 13, 19; Psalm 50. 21, 22; Isaiah 42. 8.—<sup>10</sup> Hebrew, *that was fallen*.—<sup>p</sup> Joshua 13. 4.—<sup>11</sup> Hebrew, *to the war with Israel*.—<sup>12</sup> Or, *were victualled*.

it is the actually elect of Israel, while here it only represents the elect.

**17. The young men... went out first**—That is, went out in front of the seven thousand, which followed, ready to pursue the flying Syrians. Compare verses 19, 20. **Ben-hadad sent out**—To learn what this sudden salvo from Samaria meant.

**18. Take them alive**—In the folly of his drunken insolence he was confident of victory, not dreaming of any power greater than his own.

**22. The prophet**—The same prophet that foretold the victory. Verse 13. **Return of the year**—When kings were wont to go forth to battle. See note on 2 Sam. xi. 1.

**23. Their gods are gods of the hills**—They speak after the manner of idolaters, and show their polytheistic notions of religion. They, perhaps, knew something of Israel's receiving the law at Mount Sinai, and of the temple on Mount Moriah at Jerusalem, and of the recent miracle on Mount Carmel, and had noticed the worship on the high places: and now, on their overwhelming defeat among the mountains of Samaria, they attribute the loss chiefly to those gods of the hills whom Israel worshipped. The heathen also

had hill-gods, and it seems to have been a prevalent belief that each district had its tutelary divinities. Compare 2 Kings xvii, 26.

**24. Put captains in their rooms**—Officers more skilled in warfare than these kings have shown themselves to be. The vassal kings were probably the first to become panic stricken, and to fly before the youths of Israel.

**25. Like the army that thou hast lost**—Or, *like the fallen army*. Surely Syria must have been rich in soldiers and horses and chariots, to gather so soon another such army as Ben-hadad boasts of in verse 10.

**26. Aphek**—Many suppose this to have been at the modern *Fik*, a little to the east of the Sea of Galilee; but Keil observes: "This Aphek lies not only very high, but has also a very difficult mountain pass, where the Syrians, who feared the hill-gods of the Israelites, would not have come to an engagement with them. If we reflect, besides, that the Syrians had advanced the first time as far as Samaria, we cannot doubt that this time they advanced as far as the Aphek known by the victory over Saul in the plain of Esdraelon." 1 Sam. xxix, 1.

**27. Were all present**—Rather, as  
O. T.

of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the Syrians filled the country. **28** And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, <sup>a</sup>Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. **29** And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians a hundred thousand footmen in one day. **30** But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and there a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, <sup>13</sup>into an inner chamber. **31** And his servants said unto him, Behold now,

we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, <sup>b</sup>put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life. **32** So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, Is he yet alive? <sup>c</sup>he is my brother. **33** Now the men did diligently observe whether *any thing would come from him, and did hastily catch it*: and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. **34** And Ben-hadad said unto him, <sup>d</sup>The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 37. 29, 37.—<sup>r</sup> Verse 13; Josh. 7. 8, 9; Psa. 58. 10, 11; 79. 10; Isa. 37. 29, 35; Jer. 14. 7; Ezekiel 20. 9, 14.—<sup>13</sup> Or, from chamber to

chamber. Heb. into a chamber within a chamber, chap. 22. 25.—<sup>s</sup> Genesis 37. 34.—<sup>t</sup> Verse 42; 1 Sam. 15. 8, 20.—<sup>u</sup> Chap. 15. 20.

in the margin, *were victualled*; supplied with necessary provisions.

**28. There came a man of God**—This prophet was evidently not identical with the one mentioned in verses 13, 22. Thus does one of these prophets confirm and strengthen the sayings of the other.

**29. A hundred thousand**—This number is in keeping with the immense numbers which are represented as following the king of Syria. Compare verses 10, 25, 27.

**30. A wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand**—"This tremendous destruction was caused, as I suppose, by an earthquake; and, after having seen the effects of an earthquake in Safed and Tiberias, I can easily understand and readily credit this narrative. We are not required to limit the catastrophe to the falling of a single wall; or, if this be insisted upon, we have only to suppose that it was the wall of the city, and a little consideration will convince any one familiar with Oriental fortifications that it might overwhelm a whole army. Those ramparts were very lofty and massive. An open space was always left along their base, and this would be packed full and tight, from end to end, by the remnants of Ben-hadad's mighty host,

and escape from the falling towers would be impossible."—*Thomson*. **An inner chamber**—Margin, more literally, *a chamber within a chamber*; that is, the innermost hiding place he could find. Keil takes the meaning to be that he fled from one room to another.

**31. Ropes upon our heads**—Tokens of the most abject submission and humiliation.

**32. He is my brother**—Ahab's vanity was flattered by this humiliation of his royal foe; and the king, who is subject to such vanity, will be likely to do many foolish things.

**33. Did diligently observe**—*Augured, divined*; took as a favourable omen. That which immediately follows should be rendered, *and they hastened and received assurances from him, and said, Thy brother Ben-hadad!* It was to them surprising condescension and kindness in Ahab thus to speak of the king of Syria, and they repeat his words in astonishment.

חָלָטָו occurs here only. According to Gesenius it means *they pressed, they urged*; but Fürst, more correctly, *they received a definite assurance*.

**34. The cities**—See at chap. xv, 20. **Streets for thee in Damascus**—Whole streets and houses to be known

thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then said Ahab, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

**35** And a certain man of <sup>v</sup>the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour <sup>v</sup>in the word of the Lord, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him. **36** Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, <sup>a</sup>a lion found him, and slew him. **37** Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And

<sup>v</sup> 2 Kings 2, 3, 5, 7, 15.—<sup>v</sup> Chap. 13, 17, 18.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 13, 24.—<sup>14</sup> Heb. *smiting and wound-*

and honoured as the Israelitish quarter, and something like the bazaars of modern Oriental cities. Compare "the bakers' street." Jer. xxxvii, 21. Ben-hadad's father had such a Syrian quarter in Samaria.

#### AHAB'S REPROOF, 35-43.

**35. A certain man of the sons of the prophets**—A member of one of the schools of the prophets. The head of one of these schools was a spiritual father. See note on 1 Sam. x, 5. **His neighbour**—A fellow-student among the sons of the prophets. **Smite me**—Here we first meet with an example of those symbolical actions of the prophets which occur so often in the subsequent history of Israel and Judah. This demand was made **in the word of the Lord**. It was positively required by Jehovah, and was to be symbolical. The wonderful interposition of Divine power, by which the Syrians had been defeated and Ben-hadad made a captive, was a sufficient indication to Ahab that God had appointed the king of Syria to utter destruction. Verse 42. His letting him go, therefore, was a disobedience of the Divine will. **The man refused to smite him**—And so became a representative of Ahab in his refusal to obey the word of the Lord. The prophets mentioned verses 13, 22, 28 had said enough to show Ahab that when his royal enemy fell into his power he must not covenant with him, but

the man smote him, <sup>14</sup>so that in smiting he wounded him. **38** So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face. **39** And <sup>v</sup>as the king passed by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of the battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: if by any means he be missing, then <sup>a</sup>shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt <sup>16</sup>pay a talent of silver. **40** And as thy servant was busy here and there, <sup>16</sup>he was gone. And the king of Israel said unto him, So *shall* thy judgment be; thyself hast decided it. **41** And he

*ing.*—<sup>v</sup> See 2 Samuel 12, 1, &c.—<sup>a</sup> 2 Kings 10, 24.—<sup>15</sup> Heb. *weigh*.—<sup>16</sup> Heb. *he was not*.

smite and utterly destroy him. But his making a covenant with him, and sending him away, was a refusal to smite him.

**36. A lion shall slay thee**—As in the case of the disobedient prophet of Judah. Chap. xiii, 24. Both of these examples show how fearful a thing it is for a prophet to disobey the word of the Lord; and Ahab also is to find, like Saul, (compare 1 Sam. xv, 26,) that it is equally fearful for a king to disobey.

**38. With ashes upon his face**—Rather, *with a bandage over his eyes*.

**כַּסָּה**, *a bandage, a fillet or head band*.

*Septuagint, τελαμών*. He disguised himself with this head-covering that the king might not recognize him as one of the prophets, (compare verse 41,) and he had procured himself smitten and wounded that his parable (verse 39) might have the greater semblance of reality.

**39. He cried unto the king**—His measure to elicit from Ahab his own condemnation is like that of Nathan to make David pronounce judgment on himself. Compare 2 Sam. xii, 1-12. **A talent of silver**—About one thousand seven hundred dollars. A sum, says Keil, "not to be procured by a poor man, so that he must certainly have answered with his life, for the prisoner escaped."

**40. Thyself hast decided**—As thou hast let thy prisoner go, thy life

hasted, and took the ashes away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him that he *was* of the prophets. **42** And he said unto him, thus saith the LORD, "Because thou hast let go out of *thy* hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. **43** And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased, and came to Samaria.

### CHAPTER XXI.

**A**ND it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which *was* in Jezreel, hard by the palace of Ahab king

*a* Chap. 22. 31-37. — *b* Chap. 21. 4. — *a* 1 Sam. 8. 14. — *l* Heb. *be good in thine eyes*.

must go for his life. Here Ahab, just as David, (2 Sam. xii, 5, 6,) pronounces his own condemnation.

**42. A man whom I appointed to utter destruction**—Literally, *the man of my curse*: that is, Ben-hadad, whom God had in judgment devoted to destruction. Compare Lev. xxvii, 29.

**43. Heavy and displeased**—He was vexed, troubled, and felt the burden of a sense of Divine wrath upon him; but he was still refractory and rebellious. He went home sulky and sour.

### CHAPTER XXI.

NABOTH'S SHAMEFUL EXECUTION, 1-16.

**1. The Jezreelite**—He was so identified with the place where the inheritance of his fathers lay that he was naturally called the Jezreelite. **Hard by the palace of Ahab**—Its location so near the palace enhanced its value, and made it as much an object for Naboth to retain as for Ahab to acquire. Ahab seems to have divided his residence between Samaria and Jezreel, part of the time dwelling at one place and part of the time at the other. See note on chap. xviii, 45.

**2. Give me thy vineyard**—Well did Samuel forewarn the people when they clamored for a king, "He will take your fields and your vineyards, and your olive yards, even the best of them." 1 Sam. viii, 14. **Garden of herbs**—Both a vegetable and flower garden, in which all sorts of plants and

of Samaria. **2** And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy <sup>a</sup> vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it *is* near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; *or*, if it <sup>b</sup> seem good to thee, I will give the worth of it in money. **3** And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, <sup>c</sup> that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee. **4** And Ahab came into his house <sup>d</sup> heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and

*b* Lev. 25. 23; Num. 36. 7; Ezek. 46. 18. — *c* Job 5. 2; Isa. 57. 20, 21; Jonah 4. 1, 9; Hab. 2. 9, 12.

flowers might be grown. Many allusions to horticulture are made in the Old Testament, (compare, especially, Canticles iv, 12-16,) and indicate that among the Hebrews much attention was given to the cultivation of plants, fruits, and flowers. **Near unto my house**—Near the palace. This confirms the Hebrew text in verse 1, where, instead of *palace of Ahab*, the *Septuagint* reads *threshingfloor of Ahab*.

**3. The Lord forbid it me**—Literally, *Accursed to me from Jehovah from giving the inheritance of my fathers to thee*. That is, I should be accursed or alienated from Jehovah by giving this inheritance away, or parting with it so as never to recover it again. So Naboth refused to sell his inheritance on religious grounds, for the law (Lev. xxv, 23) said, "The land shall not be sold forever;" that is, so as to be cut off forever from the claim of the original possessor. For even if, through poverty, a man was obliged to sell a part of his possession, it would return to him again at the next jubilee. Lev. xxv, 25-28. But Ahab evidently wished to have Naboth make a final and irrecoverable disposal of his estate.

**4. Heavy and displeased**—Sulky and sour, just as he was after receiving the word of the Lord from one of the sons of the prophets. Chap. xx, 43. His going to bed, and turning away his face, and refusing to eat, shows up most vividly his mean passions and the childish fretfulness of his disposition.

would eat no bread. **5** But Jezebel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread? **6** And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. **7** And Jezebel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: **8** I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth

the Jezreelite. **8** So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city, dwelling with Naboth. **9** And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth <sup>2</sup> on high among the people: **10** And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst <sup>a</sup> blaspheme God and the king. And *then* carry him out, and <sup>1</sup> stone him, that he may die. **11** And the men of his city, *even* the elders and the nobles who

d Verses 15, 16; Micah 2, 1, 2; 7, 3.—2 Heb. *in the top of the people.*

e Exod. 22, 28; Lev. 24, 15, 16; Acts 6, 11.  
f Lev. 24, 14.

**7. Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel**—Some take these words, not as a question, or as spoken in irony, but as a command or summons for the king to exercise his royal power, thus: *Do thou now govern*; that is, exercise now thy sovereign power, and show that thou, not thy subjects, rulest in Israel. But it best suits the connexion to take the words as an ironical exclamation, designed to reproach and censure the imbecile conduct of Ahab: *Thou dost now marvelously wield the sovereignty over Israel!* That is, thou, surely, art become now a mighty king to be thus set at naught! A powerful ruler to be thus sent to bed disheartened by an obstinate subject! **I will give thee the vineyard**—"I, the wife, since thou hast not the courage to act as a man and a king."—*Thenius*.

**8. Sealed them with his seal**—"In giving validity to documents, names were not in those days, nor are they now in the East, signed by the hand in writing, but impressed by a seal on which the name is engraved. Hence the importance which is attached to the signet throughout the sacred books."—*Kitto*.

**9. Proclaim a fast**—Not merely to furnish an opportunity to proceed with charges against Naboth, but to show that the city was under condemnation because of guilt, and should do some kind of penance. Fasts were proclaimed to show humiliation after defeat in battle, (Judges xx, 26; 1 Sam. xxxi, 13,) or in case of threatened calamities, (2 Chron. xx, 2-4; Joel i, 14;

ii, 12, 15,) or as an acknowledgment of great sins. 1 Sam. vii, 6; Jonah iii, 5. Jezebel would make the people believe that she piously humbled herself in view of the great crime of blasphemy with which Naboth was charged, and from which the whole city might suffer if no such repentance were manifest. **Set Naboth on high**—In a conspicuous place, where the proceedings against him might have the utmost publicity and the proper semblance of religion and justice. If his guilt should be shown by a sufficient number of witnesses, this publicity of his trial would expose him all the more to popular indignation and fury.

**10. Two men**—The law required at least two witnesses to convict a man of murder or any great crime. See Num. xxxv, 30; Deut. xvii, 6; xix, 15. So, says Wordsworth, "even Jezebel bears witness to the Pentateuch." **Sons of Belial**—Literally, *sons of worthlessness*; that is, worthless, good-for-nothing fellows. See note on 1 Sam. i, 16. **Thou didst blaspheme God and the king**—The word rendered *blaspheme* is בָּרַךְ, which usually means *to bless*, and is often used in the farewell blessing of one departing from the presence of another. Compare Gen. xlvii, 10; 1 Kings viii, 66. "To this latter signification," says Fürst, "belongs the meaning, to give the parting salutation to one in a bad sense, that is, to wish away, to imprecate upon one, to curse, to revile. Job i, 5; ii, 5. Analogy in the Semitic dialects admits of directly opposite meanings in a word." So, also, Gesenius in his Heb. Lexicon. Some

were the inhabitants in his city, \*did as Jezebel had sent unto them, and as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them. **12** <sup>a</sup> They proclaimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people. **13** And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him, *even* against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. <sup>b</sup> Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died. **14** Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, <sup>c</sup> Naboth is stoned, and is dead. **15** And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, <sup>d</sup> Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. **16** And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that

Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.

**17** <sup>m</sup> And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, **18** Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, <sup>n</sup> which is in Samaria: behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth, whither he is gone down to possess it. **19** And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the Lord, <sup>o</sup> In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. **20** And Ahab said to Elijah, <sup>p</sup> Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found *thee*: because <sup>q</sup> thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. **21** Behold, <sup>r</sup> I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab <sup>s</sup> him that pisseth

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 19. 15; 1 Sam. 22. 17; 2 Kings 10. 6, 7; 2 Chron. 24. 21.—<sup>b</sup> Isa. 58. 4.—<sup>c</sup> See 2 Kings 9. 25.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. 11. 14, 24; Eccles. 5. 8; 8. 14.—<sup>e</sup> Prov. 1. 10, 16; 4. 17.

<sup>m</sup> Psa. 9. 12.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 13. 32; 2 Chron. 22. 9.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 22. 38.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 18. 17.—<sup>q</sup> 2 Kings 17. 17; Rom. 7. 14.—<sup>r</sup> Chap. 14. 10; 2 Kings 9. 8.—<sup>s</sup> 1 Sam. 25. 22.

think that blasphemy of God and the king was so shocking to the Hebrew mind that it was expressed by this word euphemistically. **Stone him**—According to Lev. xxiv, 16, the blasphemer of Jehovah is to be stoned to death; and according to Exod. xxii, 28, cursing of the ruler is a kindred crime. The first martyr, Stephen, was stoned on the charge of blasphemy. According to 2 Kings ix, 26, Naboth's sons were also put to death with him. They were, perhaps, the only heirs that could rightly claim the inheritance; or, like Achan's children, they may have been regarded and treated as involved in the parent's guilt. See note on Josh. vii, 24.

**15. Take possession of the vineyard**—As confiscated property.

**ELIJAH'S PROPHECY AGAINST AHAB,**  
17-29.

**18. Which is in Samaria**—Or, *who reigns in Samaria*. The words merely designate the seat of Ahab's government, and his usual place of residence; not that the prophet is to meet Ahab in Samaria, or that Naboth's vineyard was in Samaria.

**19. Hast thou killed**—This inter-

rogative form of expression is here equivalent to an emphatic affirmation. **In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth**—Because of Ahab's repentance and humiliation, (verse 29,) this prophecy was not literally fulfilled in him, though at the pool of Samaria dogs did lick up his blood that fell on his chariot; (chap. xxii, 38;) but it was afterwards fulfilled in his son, on whom Jehovah laid the burden. See 2 Kings ix, 25.

**20. Hast thou found me**—Probably Ahab was trembling with alarm and terror as he uttered these words. He could not but have a profound fear of Elijah. **Mine enemy**—He charges him with being an enemy in order to weaken the force of his words, and to quiet, somewhat, his own conscience. **Because thou hast sold thyself to work evil**—Not because I am an enemy, and wish to persecute thee, but because thou hast made thyself a slave of sin, it is that I have found thee. To sell one's self to do evil is to become so utterly abandoned to sin and crime as to lose all moral principle and power to resist evil.

**21. I will bring evil**—See note on chap. xiv, 10.

against the wall, and 'him that is shut up and left in Israel. **22** And will make thine house like the house of 'Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of 'Baasha the son of Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin. **23** And "of Jezebel also spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the "wall of Jezreel. **24** \*Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat. **25** But 'there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, "whom Jezebel his wife "stirred up. **26** And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things "as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. **27** And

*t* Chap. 14. 10.—*u* Chap. 15. 29.—*v* Chap. 16. 3. 11.—*w* 2 Kings 9. 36.—*3* Or, *ditch*.—*x* Chap. 14. 11; 16. 4.—*y* Chap. 16. 30, &c.—*z* Chap. 16. 31.

**23. Dogs shall eat Jezebel**—See the fulfilment of this in 2 Kings ix, 30–37. **By the wall**—The wall of her palace, according to 2 Kings ix, 33.

**25, 26.** These two verses are parenthetically added by the writer of this history to intensify the thought of Ahab's extreme wickedness, and to show the reason of the bitter judgments that were pronounced against him.

**27. Went softly**—Walked in the slow and silent manner of a mourner. So he put on every appearance of humiliation and penitence. Many have supposed that Ahab's repentance was altogether false and hypocritical. But Jehovah considered it as sufficiently genuine to cause him to modify the sentence he had previously passed upon him. For a time, doubtless, his repentance was deep and genuine, but it soon passed away, and, like many previous convictions, was lost by reason of the evils to which he had made himself a slave.

**28. In his son's days will I bring the evil**—Jehovah makes this announcement, not because he will punish the son for the sins of his father, but because he foresees that the son will also do evil in the sight of the Lord, and will, therefore, like his father, deserve punishment.

it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and "put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. **28** And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, **29** Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: *but* "in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

## CHAPTER XXII.

**A**ND they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel. **2** And it came to pass in the third year, that "Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. **3** And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that "Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be "still,

*4* Or, *incited*.—*n* Gen. 15. 16; 2 Kings 21. 11.—*o* Gen. 37. 34.—*p* 2 Kings 9. 25.—*a* 2 Chron. 18. 2, &c.—*b* Deut. 4. 43.—*i* Heb. *silent from taking it*.

## CHAPTER XXII.

SYRIAN WARS AND AHAB'S DEATH,  
1–40.

### 1. Three years without war—

Three years from the time of the covenant between Ahab and Ben-hadad. Chap. xx, 34.

**2. Came down**—From Jerusalem to Samaria. From every part of the Holy Land Jerusalem was spoken of as *up*. Compare the parallel passage in 2 Chron. xviii. "This visit," observes Rawlinson, "indicates an entire change in the relations which we have hitherto found subsisting between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. It is probable that the common danger to which the two kingdoms were exposed from the growing power of Syria had induced them to forget their differences, and, remembering their common origin, to join together in a close alliance."

**3. Ramoth in Gilead**—Supposed by many to be identical with the modern *es Salt*, just south of Mount Gilead, on the east of the Jordan. See note on chap. iv, 13. It seems that Ben-hadad had not restored this city to Ahab, and so had failed to meet the conditions of the treaty in which he promised to restore all the cities of

and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? **4** And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, *I am as that art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses.* **5** And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to day. **6** Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king. **7** And Jehoshaphat said, *Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?* **8** And the king

of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Im-lah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil.* And Jehoshaphat said, Let not the king say so. **9** Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, Hasten *hither* Micaiah the son of Im-lah. **10** And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. **11** And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus saith the Lord, With these shalt thou push the Syrians, until thou have consumed them. **12** And all the proph-

c 2 Kings 3. 7.—d Chap. 18. 19.—e 2 Kings 3. 11.—2 Or, *eunuch*.

3 Heb. *floor*.—f Jer. 27. 2; 28. 10, 14; Zech. 1. 18, 21.

Israel which had fallen into his hands. Chap. xx, 34.

**4. I am as thou art, my people as thy people**—I am in perfect sympathy and affinity with thee; my people and my property are to be treated and used as thine own.

**5. Jehoshaphat said**—The king of Judah shows a piety superior to that of Ahab. He doubtless knew that Ahab's former successes against the Syrians were predicted by a prophet of the Lord, (chap. xx, 13; xii, 28;) and he would seek a like encouragement again.

**6. About four hundred men**—These four hundred prophets were neither the four hundred prophets of Asherah, (xviii, 19,) who did not appear before Elijah on Carmel, nor the prophets of Baal, as many old expositors thought, for by these Ahab could not inquire *at the word of the Lord*; but they were the *prophets of the calves*, that is, prophets of the kingdom of Israel, who complied with the calf worship, and gave themselves out as prophets of Jehovah, worshipped under the symbol of the calves."—*Keil*.

**7. A prophet of the Lord besides**—Jehoshaphat was not satisfied with the four hundred. He would hear Jehovah's word from another class of prophets; for, while not denying that these were prophets of the Lord, he looked upon them as doubtful characters.

**8. I hate him**—Some suppose that it was this Micaiah who uttered against Ahab the oracle recorded chap. xx, 42. Certain it is that he had spoken concerning Ahab before, and so displeased the king that he had been committed to prison. See verses 26, 27.

**9. An officer**—סֵרִיס, *a eunuch*; one who was in constant attendance on the king. The word shows how far Ahab's court had become modelled after those of the nations around him, for eunuchs were regarded as indispensable to an Oriental sovereign. **Hasten hither Micaiah**—This implies that Micaiah was in prison, and could be produced at the king's order.

**10. Each on his throne**—Thrones purposely erected for this august occasion near the gates of the city. **Robes**—Royal garments. **A void place**—Probably the site of an old threshing-floor; a broad, open space, where a vast assembly might gather.

**11. Zedekiah**—One of the four hundred false prophets. **Made him horns of iron**—In order to prophesy by symbol as well as by word. **With these shalt thou push the Syrians**—Here was an embodying of the imagery of Deut. xxxiii, 17, where of the triumph of Joseph it is said: "His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns; with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth." Not

ets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver *it* into the king's hand. **13** And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him, saying, <sup>a</sup>Behold now, the words of the prophets *declare* good unto the king with one mouth: let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak *that which is* good. **14** And Micaiah said, As the Lord liveth, <sup>b</sup>what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak. **15** So he came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? And he answered him, <sup>c</sup>Go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver *it* into the hands of the king. **16** And the king said unto him, How many times shall I ad-

<sup>a</sup> Psa. 14. 1; Isa. 30. 10, 11; Hos. 7. 3.—<sup>b</sup> Num. 22. 38.—<sup>c</sup> Judges 10. 14; 2 Chron. 18. 14.—<sup>d</sup> Num. 27. 17; Jer. 23. 1, 2; Ezek. 34. 6; Zech. 13. 7; Matt. 9. 36.

only do Zedekiah's words and action bear witness to the existence of the Pentateuch at that time, but also show his desire to strengthen his prophecy by embodying in it an old promise to the most prominent tribe in Israel.

**12. The Lord shall deliver it into the king's hand**—This announcement was ambiguous, like the heathen oracles, and capable of different explanations, for it did not distinctly designate whether the king of Israel or the king of Syria would be the victor. Micaiah, when called, uttered the same words, (verse 15;) and by his manner of voice and look imitated the irony of Elijah at Carmel, (ch. xviii. 27,) as if to suggest to Ahab how misleading and unworthy of Jehovah was such an ambiguous oracle.

**16. How many times shall I adjure thee**—Here observe how the same words, which in the mouth of the false prophets are by the king regarded as a prophecy of good, in the mouth of Micaiah are regarded as false and of evil omen.

**17. As sheep that have not a shepherd**—Appropriate simile of a people that have lost their king, and so a prophecy of the fall of Ahab and the dispersion of his army. As Zedekiah had used imagery drawn from the Pentateuch, so does Micaiah also

jure thee that thou tell me nothing *but that which is* true in the name of the Lord? **17** And he said, I saw all Israel <sup>k</sup>scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master: let them return every man to his house in peace. **18** And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil? **19** And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord: 'I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, <sup>m</sup>and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. **20** And the Lord said, Who shall <sup>n</sup>persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. **21** And there came forth <sup>a</sup>a

<sup>l</sup> Isa. 6. 1; Dan. 7. 9.—<sup>m</sup> Job 1. 6; 2. 1; Psa. 103. 20, 21; Dan. 7. 10; Zech. 1. 10; Matt. 18. 10; Heb. 1. 7, 14.—<sup>n</sup> Or, *deceive*.—<sup>a</sup> Verse 23; Job 1. 6, 7; 2. 1.

bear witness to that ancient book by using another simile of Moses. Compare Num. xxvii, 17.

**19. I saw the Lord**—Here is a vision worthy of Isaiah or Ezekiel. **All the host of heaven standing by him**—The prophet drew his imagery from the very scene before him. The kings on their thrones, and the surrounding host assembled at the gate of Samaria, were representative of the King of kings sitting on his throne and surrounded by the host of ministering spirits who do his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

**20. Who shall persuade Ahab**—Here in the light of Divine counsels we see Jehovah giving over an incorrigible sinner to judicial blindness and ruin. Ahab had rejected the truth, and hardened his heart against the force of the most convincing miracles of Divine power, and for this cause God sent him "strong delusion that he should believe a lie." 2 Thess. ii, 11.

**21. There came forth a spirit**—Literally, *the spirit*; that is, the particular spirit that served as the agent of Divine judgment in this judicial blinding of Ahab's heart. This spirit was but one of that vast host of evil powers whose ministry so largely affects the children of disobedience. This scene before the throne of the Lord is in per-

spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. **22** And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, °Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. **23** ¶ Now therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee. **24** But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote Micaiah on the cheek, and said, ¶ Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee? **25** And Micaiah said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to

o Judg. 9. 23; Job 12. 16; Ezek. 14. 9; 2 Thess. 2. 11.—p Ezek. 14. 9.—q 2 Chron. 18. 23.—r Or, from chamber to chamber. Heb. a chamber in a chamber, chap. 20. 30.

fect keeping with that recorded in Job i, 6-12. It is not merely vision and parable, but, in harmony with other Scriptures, opens to us the knowledge of a vast host of unseen spirits, going to and fro seeking whom they may destroy, (2 Peter v, 8,) yet all held in check, and often, if not always, used by Jehovah himself to execute his wise and holy purposes.

**22. Go forth, and do so**—Thus the Lord actually sends the lying spirit forth to execute a Divine judgment, just as he sent evil spirits to trouble Saul, (1 Sam. xvi, 14,) and work the destruction of Abimelech. Judg. ix, 23. Hence it was something more than a bare permission on the part of God. According to the Scriptures, Jehovah often uses the wicked spirits as agents to accomplish certain Divine judgments, and does not merely permit their work as a matter of simple toleration.

**24. Smote Micaiah**—This act of insolence was an outburst of rage and malice, prompted by a momentary consciousness that Micaiah's words were but too true. **Which way went the Spirit**—This was an attempt to turn the biting point of Micaiah's vision against himself. As if he had said: The lying spirit has suddenly gone out from me to speak through thee; how has he effected it so quickly! Which route did he take?

**25. Go into an inner chamber**—

hide thyself. **26** And the king of Israel said, Take Micaiah and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; **27** And say, Thus saith the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. **28** And Micaiah said, If thou return at all in peace, °the Lord hath not spoken by me. And he said, Harken, O people, every one of you. **29** So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. **30** And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, ¶ I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel disguised himself, and

r Deut. 16. 3; Psal. 80. 5; Isa. 30. 20.—s Num. 16. 29; Deut. 18. 20, 21, 22.—t Or, when he was to disguise himself, and enter into the battle.—t 2 Chron. 35. 22; Jer. 23. 24.

No account of Zedekiah's subsequent history is recorded, but it has generally been, with much probability, supposed that when Ahab's friends saw the fatal issue of this war for Ramoth-gilead, they bent their fury against this lying prophet and his associates, and then, too late, Zedekiah painfully recalled the saying of the man of God whom he so maliciously mocked.

**26. Carry him back**—This expression, together with the following verse, clearly intimates that Micaiah had previously been incarcerated for prophesying contrary to the desires of the king.

**27. Bread of affliction**—Scanty prison fare, causing pain and sorrow, and ever reminding him of cruelty and want.

**30. I will disguise myself**—This rendering, which follows the Septuagint, gives the true sense. The Hebrew is literally, *to disguise myself and go into battle*, as if the words were an exclamation, and thrown in without proper grammatical connexion. Ahab feared the issue of this battle, for Micaiah's warning words had been to him an evil omen, and he thought by disguising himself to escape personal injury. Possibly, also, spies had informed him of the order of the king of Syria for his men to fight only with the king of Israel. **Put thou on thy robes**—Some have imagined that Ahab would have been pleased to have had Jehoshaphat

went into the battle. **31** But the king of Syria commanded his "thirty and two captains that had rule over his chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel.

**32** And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat "cried out.

**33** And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him.

**34** And a certain man drew a bow at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the "joints of the harness:

wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host; for I am "wounded.

**35** And the battle<sup>10</sup> increased that day: and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the wound into the "midst of the chariot.

**36** And there went a proclamation throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country.

**37** So the king died, and <sup>12</sup>was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria.

**38** And one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they.

<sup>u</sup> Chap. 20. 24; 2 Chron. 18. 30. — <sup>v</sup> 2 Chron. 18. 31; Prov. 13. 20. — <sup>7</sup> Heb. *in his simplicity*, 2 Sam. 15. 11. — <sup>8</sup> Heb. *joints and the breastplate*.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. *made sick*. — <sup>10</sup> Heb. *ascended*. — <sup>11</sup> Heb. *bosom*. — <sup>u</sup> Chap. 12. 24; Judg. 7. 7, 8; 21. 24; 1 Sam. 4. 10; 2 Sam. 19. 8; 2 Kings 14. 12. — <sup>12</sup> Heb. *came*.

killed in this war that he might seize upon his kingdom and unite it with his own, and therefore counseled him to array himself in his royal robes. As if to favour this thought, the Septuagint has, *Put on my apparel*. But this is hardly likely, and the sense of the passage more naturally is: Evil is predicted of me, and I will therefore disguise; but this precaution is not necessary for thee, and thou mayest put on thy royal apparel.

**31. His thirty and two captains** — Whom he had appointed in the room of the thirty-two vassal kings. Chap. xx, 1, 24. **Fight... only with the king of Israel** — This is the return which Ahab gets for his kindness in sparing Ben-hadad's life. Chap. xx, 32.

**32. Jehoshaphat cried out** — He called upon God to save him, and probably used in his prayer his own name, or title, or at least some expression by which those Syrian captains learned that he was not the king of Israel. By this means "the Lord helped him; and God moved them to depart from him." 2 Chron. xviii, 31.

**34. A certain man** — Josephus says he was a young nobleman whose name was Naaman; the same, perhaps, who afterwards became a leper and was healed by Elisha. See note on 2 Kings v, 1. **At a venture** — This is not a proper rendering. The Hebrew is *לְחֵמָה*, *in his innocence; in his simplicity*;

*ty*; that is, without any evil intent, and not expecting to strike so sacred a mark as the king. The thought is, not that he shot at random, but that he had no thought that the man at whom he aimed was Ahab. **Between the joints of the harness** — Margin, *joints and the breastplate*. But to speak of smiting between the joints and a part of the armour is strange, and to render joints of the harness or breastplate is not allowable. The word rendered *harness* is coat of mail, on which see note at 1 Sam. xvii, 5. The word rendered *joints*, Bähr explains as a *hanging skirt*, which protected the lower part of the body, and understands that the arrow penetrated between these two parts of the king's armour, and entered the lower part of the abdomen.

**35. The king was stayed up** — Contrary to his first directions to be carried out of the host. The first order was probably partially obeyed; but as the king on retiring saw the battle waxing hotter and hotter, he thought it better for him to stay and witness the fight, and encourage his own troops as far as his disguised presence might serve to do so. **The midst** — Or, *bosom*, of the chariot; the hollow place inside where the warriors stood.

**38. Dogs licked up his blood** — The blood which all that day had been trickling through his armour and falling down upon the chariot. Thus was par-

washed his armour; according <sup>a</sup> unto the word of the Lord which he spake. **39** Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and <sup>v</sup> the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? **40** So Ahab slept with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.

**41** And <sup>z</sup> Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. **42** Jehoshaphat *was* thirty and five years old when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Azubah

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 21. 19. — <sup>v</sup> Amos 3. 15. — <sup>z</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 31. — <sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. 17. 3. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 14. 23; 15. 14; 2 Kings 12. 3.

tially fulfilled the words of Elijah. Chap. xxi. 19. **And they washed his armour**—Rather, *and harlots bathed*; that is, harlots came and bathed in the water of the pool while it was yet stained with the blood of the fallen king. This fact is recorded to show the unconcern and contempt with which the death of Ahab was regarded even in his own metropolis.

**39. The ivory house**—Probably his royal palace at Samaria was so ornamented and inwrought with ivory as to be called the ivory house. Of his works no other record now remains.

#### JEHOSHAPHAT'S REIGN, 41–50.

The reign of this king of Judah is rapidly passed over in this book, but is more fully detailed in 2 Chron. chaps. xvii–xx.

**44. Made peace with the king of Israel**—His son Jehoram married Ahab's daughter. 2 Kings viii. 18. As we have just seen, Jehoshaphat went up with Ahab to battle against Ramoth-gilead. Blunt finds some undesigned coincidences in this history which serve to confirm its veracity. "Thus, Ahab is succeeded by a son *Ahaziah* (ver. 40) on the throne of Israel, and Jehoram is also succeeded by a son *Ahaziah* (the nephew of the other) on the throne of Judah. 2 Chron. xxii. 1. Again, Ahaziah, king of Israel, dies, and he is succeeded by a *Jehoram*; (2 Kings i. 17; iii 1;) but a *Jehoram*, the brother in law

the daughter of Shilhi. **43** And <sup>a</sup> he walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing *that which was right* in the eyes of the Lord: nevertheless <sup>b</sup> the high places were not taken away; *for* the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places. **44** And <sup>c</sup> Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. **45** Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he showed, and how he warred, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? **46** <sup>d</sup> And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land. **47** <sup>e</sup> There *was* then no king in Edom: a deputy

<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. 19. 2; 2 Cor. 6. 14. — <sup>d</sup> Chap. 14. 24; 15. 12. — <sup>e</sup> Gen. 25. 23; 2 Sam. 8. 14; 2 Kings 3. 9; 8. 20.

of the former, is at the same moment on the throne of Judah, as his father's colleague. 2 Kings i. 17. However our patience may be put to the proof in disengaging the thread of Israel and Judah at this point of their annals, we have the satisfaction of feeling that the intricacy of the history at such a moment is a very strong argument for the truth of the history. For though no remark is made upon this identity of names, we at once perceive that it may very naturally be referred to the union which is said to have taken place between the houses."

**46. The sodomites**—See note on chap. xiv. 24. It seems that Asa had not succeeded in removing all. Compare chap. xv. 12.

**47. No king in Edom**—Ever since David subjected the Edomites (2 Sam. viii. 13, 14) that people had been without a king, and tributary to Israel. In Jehoshaphat's reign they joined Moab and Ammon against Israel, but were most disastrously defeated by the hand of God. 2 Chron. xx. 10–23. **A deputy was king**—נָכָר, *a prefect*; an officer like one of those twelve (chap. iv. 7) whom Solomon appointed over the several districts of his kingdom. This officer was sometimes called *king*. 2 Kings iii. 9. "This note is introduced by the writer to account for Jehoshaphat's building ships at Ezion-geber, which was in the territory of the Edomites,

was king. **48** 'Jehoshaphat' <sup>13</sup> made ships of Tarshish to go to Ophir for gold: <sup>a</sup> but they went not; for the ships were broken at <sup>i</sup> Ezion-geber. **49** Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the ships. But Jehoshaphat would not. **50** And <sup>i</sup> Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead. **51** <sup>i</sup> Ahaziah the son of Ahab began

to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. **52** And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and <sup>m</sup> walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: **53** For <sup>n</sup> he served Baal, and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 35, &c. — <sup>13</sup> Or, had *ten ships*.  
— <sup>g</sup> Chap. 10. 22. — <sup>h</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 37.

<sup>i</sup> Chap. 9. 26. — <sup>k</sup> 2 Chron. 21. 1. — <sup>l</sup> Verse 40.  
— <sup>m</sup> Chap. 15. 26. — <sup>n</sup> Judg. 2. 11; Chap. 16. 31.

and which showed them to be at that time under the Jewish yoke."—*Clarke*.

**48. Ships of Tarshish**—Ships designed to go to Tarshish, as 2 Chron. xx, 36, explains it. On *Tarshish*, see note at chap. x, 22; and on *Ophir*, note on chap. ix, 28. Here observe that ships designed to carry on commerce with Tarshish might be built at Ezion-geber, and also might be used to carry on commerce with Ophir. To some it may seem strange that ships designed to go to Tartessus, in Spain, were built on the Red Sea; but if the circumnavigation of Africa was understood in that ancient time, as we have assumed in note on chap. x, 22, then this building of ships at Ezion-geber to go to Tartessus need not seem strange at all. Besides, the former friendly relations between the courts of Jerusalem and Tyre probably no longer existed; and as the Phenicians were masters of the Mediterranean Sea, Jehoshaphat thought his commerce with Tartessus would be safer and easier by way of the Red Sea and the coast of Africa. Keil, however, supposes that this fleet was to be transported from Ezion-geber across the Isthmus of Suez, where Cleopatra afterwards sought to transport her fleet—a supposition hardly probable if the route around Africa were known. **The ships were broken**—Probably by a storm, and because the boats were not well-built, and the Jewish sailors had not the proper knowledge of the sea

and of the management of ships. In Solomon's time the Hebrews had the aid of Phenician shipmen both in building and managing their fleets; (chap. ix, 27;) but now, for want of these, they suffered loss. **Ezion-geber**—See note on chap. ix, 26.

**49. Jehoshaphat would not**—From 2 Chron. xx, 36, 37, we learn that Ahaziah did join himself with Jehoshaphat in building ships at Ezion-geber; and for allowing this, Jehoshaphat was reprobated by the prophet Eliezer, and the ships were wrecked as a Divine judgment for the offence. Accordingly we naturally infer that Jehoshaphat's attempt to form for himself a navy, as described in the preceding verse, was subsequent to the one spoken of in 2 Chron. xx, 36; and when Ahaziah wished again to join himself with Jehoshaphat in this second attempt, the latter refused. But nevertheless his ship-building proved a failure.

#### BEGINNING OF AHAZIAH'S REIGN, 51–53.

**51. Reigned two years**—More exactly speaking, one year and part of another. Compare 2 Kings iii, 1, and see note on 2 Kings i, 17.

With this account of the beginning of Ahaziah's reign the next chapter ought to have commenced. It will be seen from these few verses that Ahaziah followed in the footsteps of his wicked father

## SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

## CHAPTER I.

**T**HEN Moab <sup>a</sup>rebelled against Israel <sup>b</sup>after the death of Ahab. **2** And Ahaziah fell down through <sup>c</sup>a lattice in his upper chamber that *was* in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of <sup>d</sup>Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. **3** But

<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam. 8. 2. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 3. 5. — <sup>c</sup> Judges 5. 28; Acts 20. 9. — <sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 5. 10.

## CHAPTER I.

## AHAZIAH'S SICKNESS AND REPROOF BY ELIJAH, 1-8.

**1. Moab rebelled**—The Moabites had been subjected to Israel in the time of David, (2 Sam. viii, 2,) and until the death of Ahab were a tributary nation. Chap. iii, 4. This notice of the rebellion seems to be introduced here with an implied reference to the sickness of Ahaziah, which is immediately mentioned, as if it were one reason why no effort was made during this monarch's reign to subdue the rebellion. The history of this revolt of Moab is resumed again at chap. iii, 4.

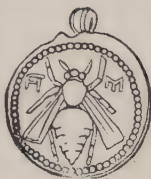
**2. A lattice in his upper chamber**—That is, the latticed window of an upper room. Compare Cant. ii, 9. The windows of ancient Eastern houses had no glass. "They were only latticed, and thus gave free passage to the air and admitted light, while birds and bats were excluded. In winter the cold air was kept out by vails over the windows, or by shutters, with openings in them sufficient to admit light."

—*Kitto*. **And was sick**—The consequence of his fall is thus told, but the particulars of his fall are not stated, and conjecture is here useless. **Baal-zebub the god of Ekron**—The *Fly-god* was worshipped by the Philisines

the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?* **4** Now therefore thus saith the Lord, <sup>1</sup>Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *The bed whither thou art gone up, thou shalt not come down from it.*

at Ekron, and the plague of flies in hot climates serves to account for the worship of a deity of this name. The word *Baal* in the composition of this idol's name, taken in connexion with the fact that the king of Israel, who had adopted the Baal worship of Tyre, sends to Ekron to inquire, shows that there was a close relationship between



the idolatry of Phœnicia and Philistia; and on a silver coin of the Phœnician town Aradus (Ezekiel xxvii, 8, Arvad) is engraved the figure of a fly—a device having, probably, some reference to this same idol Baal-zebub. 1 Sam. vi, 5, shows how the Philistines of Ekron hastened, in time of suffering, to make images of the things that plagued them. On *Ekron*, see at 1 Sam. v, 20. It was the chief seat of the worship of this god. The probable reason of Ahaziah's sending to inquire of the god of Ekron was because of some special fame of this oracle.

**3. Not a god in Israel**—This inquiry of a strange god was at once a violation of the first commandment of the decalogue (Exod. xx, 3) and an utter rejection of Jehovah, and deserved the judgment of death.

die. And Elijah departed. **5** And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? **6** And they said unto him, There came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the Lord, *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?* therefore thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. **7** And he said unto them, <sup>2</sup>What manner of man *was he* which came up to meet you, and told you these words? **8** And they answered him, *He was* 'a

<sup>e</sup> Isa. 41. 22, 23.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *What was the manner of the man.*

**8. A hairy man**—Literally, *a man, a lord, of hair*; lord of the hairy mantle. A rough garment, woven of goats' hair, and fastened with a leather strap about his loins, formed, apparently, the sole dress of Elijah. "Inaccurately as the word mantle represents such a garment, it has yet become so identified with Elijah that it is impossible now to alter it. It is desirable, therefore, to substitute "mantle" for "garment" in Zech. xiii, 4, a passage from which it would appear that since the time of Elijah his garb had become the recognised sign of a prophet of Jehovah."—*Grove*. The prophets were wont to wear a distinctive dress, expressive, in some way, of the nature of their work. Isaiah wore a garment of sackcloth, as a mark of sorrow and self-abasement for the sins of the people. Isa. xx, 2. John the Baptist attired himself like Elijah, (in whose spirit and power he came, Matt. iii, 4;) and the outer garb was a representative of his inner character and spirit.

ELIJAH CALLS FIRE FROM HEAVEN,  
9-16.

**9. Sent unto him a captain of fifty**—To take him by force, and bring him down. **He sat on the top of a hill**—Perhaps it was the top of Carmel, though the place is uncertain. **Came down**—This order of the king was haughty and bold, and, being sent with hostile purpose to the prophet, was virtually bidding defiance to the

hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins. And he said, *It is Elijah the Tishbite.*

**9** Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And he went up to him: and behold, he sat on the top of a hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. **10** And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, *If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.* And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. **11** Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus

<sup>f</sup> See Zech. 13. 4; Matt. 3. 4.—<sup>g</sup> Num. 11. 1; 16. 35; Luke 9. 54.

God of Israel, and demanded punishment. The manner and action of the captain and his fifty seem to have been as defiant and insulting as the order itself, and hence one reason of the severe judgment.

**10. Let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty**—This was a miracle of Divine judgment, and in perfect keeping with the spirit of the old dispensation, as many examples may be cited to show. Exod. xix, 13, 32; x, 27; Num. xiv, 37; xvi, 21, 32, 35, 49; xxv, 4, 9. In this respect the new dispensation widely differs from the old. "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke ix, 51-56, where see notes. But it must not be understood that when our Lord rebuked the two disciples, and showed them the difference between the Law and the Gospel as to the spirit of each, he thereby blamed this act of Elijah. "He blamed the two disciples who dishonoured Elijah, by endeavouring to pervert his act into a precedent for a proposal which was altogether dissimilar to that act of Elijah, in all the circumstances of the case. Elijah was God's minister for executing his Divine judgment. The two disciples were but the servants of their own anger. There was a fire in their breasts which God had never kindled; far was it from the Saviour of the world to second their earthly fire with his heavenly."—*Wordsworth*.

hath the king said, Come down quickly.

**12** And Elijah answered and said unto them, If I *be* a man of God, let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. **13** And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and <sup>a</sup>fell on his knees before Elijah, and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, <sup>b</sup>be precious in thy sight. **14** <sup>c</sup>Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.

3 Heb. bowed. — <sup>a</sup>1 Sam. 26. 21; Psa. 72. 14.

**11. Come down quickly**—The manner of this second captain towards the prophet is even more insolent than that of the other.

**12. The fire of God**—These severe judgments were not the fallible Elijah's work, but the work of Elijah's God, who to the incorrigibly wicked is ever "a consuming fire." Heb. xii, 29.

**13. Fell on his knees before Elijah**—This was very different from the manner of the two former. **These fifty thy servants**—Not Ahaziah's servants, but Elijah's. This humble and reverential manner showed becoming respect for Elijah and his God, and turned away the fierce anger of Jehovah. Had the former captains observed like respect, the penal fire had not fallen.

**15. Be not afraid of him**—Notwithstanding all the wonders wrought by God through the ministry of Elijah, he ever continued a man of like passions with ourselves, and in this case needed the assuring voice of the angel in order to go with firmness and utter his message to the king himself.

DEATH OF AHAZIAH, 17, 18.

**17. He died according to the word of the Lord**—His death, like that of the two companies of fifties, was a judgment from Heaven. It would not do to punish those messengers of the king for insolence towards Jehovah and his prophet, and let the king himself go clear. So this impi-

**15** And the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah, Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose, and went down with him unto the king. **16** And he said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, *is it not because there is no God in Israel to inquire of his word?* therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.

**17** So he died according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken. And <sup>a</sup>Jehoram reigned in his stead, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he had no son. **18** Now the rest of the

<sup>i</sup> Verses 10, 11. — <sup>k</sup> Chap. 3. 1.

ous monarch is made to drag out his last days under the consciousness of being an object of Jehovah's wrath.

**Jehoram reigned in his stead**—This Jehoram was a brother of Ahaziah, and succeeded him on the throne because he had no son. **In the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat**—On the probable reason for this likeness of names among the kings of the two rival kingdoms, see note on 1 Kings xxii, 44. According to 1 Kings xxii, 42, Jehoshaphat reigned twenty-five years, and according to chap. iii, 1, Ahab's son, Jehoram, began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, whence it appears, as our margin expresses it, that Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, was made *prorox* some years before his father's death. Compare also 2 Chron. xxi, 3. But according to chap. viii, 16, Jehoshaphat's Jehoram began to reign in the fifth year of Ahab's Jehoram, which, according to the above statements, would be the twenty-third year of Jehoshaphat. Now, how could Ahab's Jehoram begin to reign in the second year of Jehoshaphat's Jehoram, and yet the latter begin to reign in the fifth year of the former? A solution of the difficulty, in which Usher, Lightfoot, Patrick, Keil, and Wordsworth substantially agree, is thus stated by the last-named commentator: "Jehoshaphat made two sessions of sovereignty to his son Jehoram—one partial and temporary, the other total and

acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

α Gen.

final. The first was made in the seventeenth year of his reign, because he then quitted Jerusalem in order to join Ahab against the Syrians, (1 Kings xxii;) he then left his son Jehoram to act as viceroy in his absence. But in the twenty-third year of his reign Jehoshaphat associated his son Jehoram with him in the entire sovereignty, and therefore the eight years of that son (chap. viii, 17) are not to be reckoned from Jehoshaphat's death, but from the twenty-third year of his reign, two years before his death."

## CHAPTER II.

### ELIJAH'S ASCENSION, 1-18.

We have in this chapter the record of one of the most impressive narratives of the Old Testament history. As in patriarchal times Enoch walked with God, and was translated to heaven without tasting death, (Gen. v, 24; Heb. xi, 5,) so under the Mosaic dispensation we have this record of Elijah, whose whole life was a monumental wonder of divine intercourse and power, and whose removal from the world without tasting death surpassed in sublimity and grandeur the translation of the patriarchal saint. To study and appreciate the closing scenes in the history of this great man is to tread on holy ground. The ascension of Elijah has ever been regarded as typical of the ascension of our Lord; and there are points of resemblance, as well as noticeable contrasts. Elijah, says Keil, ascended in the fiery tempest, the symbol of the judicial righteousness of God. And appropriately; because as servant of the Lord, as minister of the law, he preached with fiery zeal to his apostate generation the fire of the anger of Divine righteousness. Christ ascended calmly and silently before the eyes of all his disciples, and a cloud received him out of their sight. He ascended as the Son, to whom all power in heaven and

## CHAPTER II.

AND it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven

5. 24.

earth was given. He was transfigured by his resurrection and ascension into the imperishable *Divine* nature, and returned, by virtue of his eternal Godhead, to the Father.

Since Elijah's ascension took place near where Moses died and was buried, (Deut. xxxiv, 5,) and since both these holy prophets met with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, it is natural for us to compare them in the manner of their leaving the world. Moses died on account of his sin at Kadesh, (Deut. xxxii, 50, 51,) and, though he was law-giver, he passed from his earthly life by the way of the law, which worketh death as the wages of sin. But Elijah, as typical forerunner of Christ, and who, appearing again in spirit and power in the person of John the Baptist, prepares his way by turning the hearts of the fathers to the children, (Mal. iv, 5, 6; Matt. xi, 14,) ascends to heaven without tasting death, and thus further points to Him who, by his resurrection and ascension, destroys the power of sin and of death, and abolishes the curse of the law from every one that believeth.

1. **When the Lord would take up Elijah**—There was a set time in Jehovah's purpose when this great miracle should be wrought. It was an event of importance to all ages, inasmuch as it would teach lessons of incalculable worth. **Into heaven**—Literally, *the heavens*. Into what heaven? Does it merely mean the sky, where the birds fly and the clouds float? That would be a supposition unworthy of the sublime transaction. The only rational interpretation of the words involves the doctrine that Elijah ascended to the heavenly abode of the saints of God. See on verse 11. **By a whirlwind**—כַּעֲרָה, *a storm, a tempest*.

This was the immediate instrumentality or agent by which he was taken up. **From Gilgal**—They went from Gilgal down to Beth-el. Verse 2. Hence

O. T.

by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal. **2** And Elijah said unto Elisha, "Tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Beth-el. And Elisha said *unto him*, As the Lord liveth, and *as thy soul liveth*, I will not leave thee. So they went down to Beth-el. **3** And "the sons of the prophets that *were* at Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace. **4** And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, *As the Lord liveth*, and *as thy*

b 1 Kings 19. 21. — c Ruth 1. 15, 16. — d 1 Sam. 1. 26; verses 4, 6; chap. 4. 30.

this Gilgal could not have been identical with the place of the same name on the east of Jericho, where Joshua first encamped after passing the Jordan, (Josh. iv, 19;) but the modern *Jiljilia*, on a lofty eminence about half way between Jerusalem and Shechem. Here, in Elijah's time, there seems to have been a school of the prophets.

**2. Tarry here**—Why should Elijah thus exhort Elisha? Some think, to prove his fidelity and love; but others, with greater probability, think that Elijah wanted no human eye to witness his departure from the world, and that feelings of deep humility prompted this request. **I will not leave thee**—Elisha seems to have had a revelation, or at least a premonition, that his master was about to be taken away from him that day, and "no dread of that final parting could deter him from the mournful joy of seeing with his own eyes the last moments, and of hearing with his own ears the last words, of the prophet of God."—*Stanley*.

**3. The sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el**—Here, at the very place where the calf-worship of Jeroboam was chiefly observed, there existed a school of the prophets. Their zeal and devotion to the true God of Israel perhaps served largely to counteract the prevalent idolatry, and preserve among the hosts of the people a faithful seven thousand. See notes on 1 Sam. x, 5, and 1 Kings xix, 18. **Knowest thou**—The sch<sup>o</sup>ls of the

soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho. **5** And the sons of the prophets that *were* at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know *it*; hold ye your peace. ■ And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here; for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, *As the Lord liveth*, and *as thy soul liveth*, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. **7** And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood <sup>1</sup> to view afar off: and they two stood by Jordan. ■ And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped *it* together,

e 1 Kings 20. 35; verse 5. 7, 15; chap. 4. 1, 38; 9. 1  
1 Heb. *in sight*, or, *over against*.

prophets, both at Beth-el and Jericho, (verse 5,) have also a premonition that Elijah is to be taken away. Perhaps, as Kitto suggests, his unusually solemn manner that day, his countenance and conversation more heavenward, and all his demeanour, seemed to say, "Ye shall see my face no more." **Take away thy master from thy head**—That is, from being thy head; thy spiritual father, teacher, leader, and director. The expression, which literally is, *taken from over thy head*, might also intimate the manner of Elijah's removal. **Yea, I know**—He replies with emphasis, but solemnity. Literally, the Hebrew is, *Of course I know*; *hush!*

**4. Jericho**—A city in the Jordan valley. See on Josh. ii, 1. In Ahab's reign Hiel, the Beth-elite, had rebuilt this city. 1 Kings xvi, 34.

**7. Fifty men... stood to view afar off**—What all they saw we are not told. They probably saw the waters of Jordan divided, and the two prophets pass beyond the stream; and possibly they beheld Elijah at the moment he was parted from Elisha; but they probably did not behold his ascension, for of that Elisha had only a momentary glimpse, and that by special grace of God.

**8. His mantle**—The shaggy garment that had been so long his prophetic badge. **Wrapped it together**—Rolled it up in the form of a twisted cord, or a wonder-working rod

and smote the waters, and 'they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground. 9 And it came to pass, when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said,

f So Exod. 14. 21; Josh. 3. 16; verse 14.

**Smote the waters**—As if they were an enemy in his way. Elijah's mantle was to him at Jordan what the rod of God was to Moses at the Red Sea; (Exod. xiv, 16, 21;) and many things in the lives of these two great prophets were strikingly parallel. Bishop Hall beautifully says: "There must be a fit parallel between these two great prophets who should meet Christ on Tabor. Both fasted forty days; both had visions of God in Horeb; both were sent to rebuke kings; both prepared miraculous tables; both opened heaven; both revenged idolatry; both quenched the thirst of Israel; both divided the waters; both of them are forewarned of their departure; the body of Moses is hid; the body of Elijah is translated."

9. **Ask what I shall do for thee**—One last request Elisha is permitted to make, and at a moment when his emotions might have made it a difficult thing for him to present an appropriate request. **Before I be taken away**—The departing Elijah consciously carries with him into heaven the sympathies and memories of earth. After his departure he will be no less Elijah than before, and he will remember and think of Elisha no less than Elisha will of him; but there will be no more personal communion between them; and so what Elisha has to ask must be asked before Elijah departs, for there may be no requests made of the saints after they are gone from earth. **A double portion of thy spirit**—This is the sense of the Hebrew, which literally reads, *A mouth of two in thy spirit*; that is, a mouthful for two persons, a twofold portion. It has an allusion to the law of Deut. xxi, 17, which provides that a double portion of an inheritance shall be given to the firstborn son; that is, a portion double that given to any other heir. Elisha,

I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. 10 And he said, 2Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so. 11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and

2Heb. *Thou hast done hard in asking.*

as the first and chief spiritual son of Elijah, wisely asks, not that he may become greater than his spiritual father, but that an unusually large endowment of the same spirit that dwelt in Elijah may also rest on him, and thus qualify him to be at least a somewhat worthy successor of Elijah. He wished that he might have more of Elijah's spirit than any other of the sons of the prophets, and thus be honoured as the first one among them.

10. **A hard thing**—It was a request which Elijah had no power to grant; but his own prayer to God might be largely instrumental in procuring it as a Divine gift to Elisha. The fervent prayer (James v, 16, 17) that brought abundant showers from heaven (1 Kings xviii, 42-45) might also bring gifts of the Spirit. The passage clearly shows that Elijah was to be somehow instrumental in procuring for Elisha his desire, and he may have prayed for Elisha after he had been translated, or even while he was being carried up into heaven. We may make requests of our departing friends before they leave us, and they may remember us, and pray for us in heaven; but after their departure we may not pray to them.

**If thou see me . . . taken from thee**—That is, at the moment when I am taken, not after I am gone. Here was no pledge to appear unto Elisha after his departure. The meaning is explained by what follows; Elisha saw the chariot and horses of fire, and Elijah carried up in a whirlwind, and this sight was to be to him a sign that what he had asked should be granted. Elijah was enabled by Divine inspiration to inform Elisha of this sign beforehand.

11. **They still went on, and talked**—What moments were those, what conversation never to be for-

talked, that, behold, *there appeared* <sup>a</sup> a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elishah

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 6. 17; Psa. 104. 4.

gotten! It was a walking and talking on the verge of heaven! **A chariot of fire, and horses of fire**—These were creations of the spiritual world; a part of that Divine machinery by which God consummates the purposes of his wisdom and providence. There are not only angels in heaven, but horses and chariots ready to do the bidding of the Most High. This heavenly scene which Elishah witnessed was no hallucination, nor were the chariot and horses of fire a mere ideal symbol seen only in vision, like the living creatures which Ezekiel saw by the river Chebar, (Ezek. i. 5-14;) but they had actual existence in the spiritual world, and were only a part of that vast host, the sound of whose movements David once heard over the mulberry trees, (2 Sam. v. 24,) and who at a later time filled the mountains round about Elishah. Chap. vi. 17. Why should we doubt this as a fact of the unseen world when we are told (Psa. lxxviii, 17) that the chariots of

God are רַבְתִּים אֲלֵפֵי שָׁנָאן, *two myriads, repeated thousands*, and they that minister unto him are thousand thousands, and they that stand before him are myriad myriads. Dan. vii. 10. **Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven**—That is, the moment the fiery chariot separated the two prophets a sudden tempest broke upon Elijah and carried him aloft into heaven. It is not said that Elijah went up in the fire-chariot, but in a tempest, the chariot serving to separate Elijah from Elishah, as if defining a boundary between the earthly and the heavenly states. It has been usually and very naturally assumed, however, that the translated prophet ascended in the chariot, and the chariot was borne aloft on the wings of the wind. Compare Psa. civ. 3. The **heaven** to which Elijah went was the abode of God's saints, who rest from their earthly labours, but employ themselves in higher and holier works than it enters our

went up by a whirlwind into heaven. **12 And Elishah saw it**, and he cried, <sup>b</sup> My father, my father, the chariot of

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 13. 14.

minds to conceive. There he met with Moses, who had died and was buried not far from the place whence he ascended; and with that elder prophet he afterwards descended from his heavenly home to appear to the three disciples, and to talk with Jesus of his exit from the world. Luke ix. 30, 31. This translation of Elijah to heaven, and the appearance of the chariot and horses of fire, like other similar events of Old Testament Scripture, teach the existence of another world beyond us, unseen by the natural eye; a realm whose inhabitants and hierarchies and orders of ministries are numerous beyond all computation. But Elijah entered this heaven without tasting death, or at least by a marvellous transformation. The human body, with its earthly modes of life, must be unsuited to the heavenly state, and hence we suppose, in harmony with other Scripture, that at the moment of his separation from Elishah, Elijah was changed, as in the twinkling of an eye, and ascended with a renewed spiritualized body, made compatible with the nature of heavenly existence. Thus has he become a representative of those saints who shall not die, but be changed at the coming of the Lord. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; 1 Thess. iv. 17. It is contrary to the evident import of this account of Elijah's departure, and contrary to the teachings of other Scriptures, to assume that his body must have become suddenly decomposed and dissolved into dust, or that it was thrown down again, as some of the sons of the prophets thought, (verse 16,) on some mountain, or in some valley, a lifeless corpse. Elijah truly ascended bodily to heaven, but his body underwent such a spiritualizing change as fitted it for the heavenly life; hence our doctrine that man is all immortal—body as well as spirit.

**12. Elishah saw**—Saw the whole scene; the chariot, and horses, and the transfigured Elijah moving away from

Israel, and the horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces. **13** He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the <sup>3</sup>bank of Jordan; **14** And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *lip*.

the earth. Elisha saw this, however, not with his natural eyes, for it was a scene belonging to the spiritual world, and to behold it he must, like the young man mentioned, vi, 17, have his inner senses unveiled. This sight was a special Divine favour, and was made by Elijah the conditional sign of Elisha's obtaining a double portion of his spirit. Verse 10. **My father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof**—These words should be understood as an exclamation of wonder and amazement. Elisha sees his spiritual father depart, and he sees the chariot and the celestial steeds, and he calls after them all. We can hardly suppose that by this exclamation he meant at that moment to express the thought which the Targum attaches to the words: "My master, my master, who wast better to Israel by thy prayers than horses and chariots." Doubtless Elisha afterwards often related this marvellous scene, and uttered these words in the hearing of men; and as he was ever associated in the minds of the people with his ascended master, and they spoke of him as the one "who poured water on the hands of Elijah," (chap. iii, 11,) so it was very natural for the king of Israel when he visited him in his last sickness to weep

over his face and repeat these very words. See chap. xiii, 14. **He saw him no more**—His inner vision was closed again, and all that wondrous scene vanished from his view. **Rent them in two pieces**—In token of sorrow and bereavement. He would fain have gone with Elijah into heaven. He had closely followed his master all that day, persistently refusing to leave him; and now, when the chariot and horses of fire separate them, and he suddenly finds himself alone, a

the waters, and said, Where *is* the Lord God of Elijah? And when he also had smitten the waters, <sup>1</sup>they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. **15** And when the sons of the prophets which *were* <sup>2</sup>to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet

<sup>2</sup> Verse 8.—<sup>3</sup> Verse 7.

bitter sense of loneliness comes over him, and he acts like a heartbroken mourner.

**13. He took up also the mantle of Elijah**—The same mantle which the ascended prophet had cast upon him at Abel-meholah as a symbolic call to be prophet in his stead. 1 Kings xix, 16, 19. It was thenceforth to be to Elisha what it had been to Elijah, and served to designate him as Elijah's successor.

**14. Smote the waters**—Elisha's first miracle is identical in nature with the last of Elijah, and so the spirit and power of the father rests upon his spiritual son, and by him continues active in the world. The sons of the prophets beheld, from their mountain height, (verse 7,) this miracle, as they probably had the last one of Elijah, and hence it served to confirm them as well as Elisha himself in the belief that Elijah's spirit rested on him. Verse 15.

**Where is the Lord God of Elijah**—According to the Vulgate he smote the waters once, and they were not divided; then he spoke these words and again smote them, and they divided hither and thither. This thought, however, has no support in the Hebrew text. The words were spoken with the conviction that the last miracle of the ascended prophet would now be repeated as a confirming sign to Elisha that Elijah's God would be with him. **And when he also had smitten**—This is a faulty rendering of the Hebrew. We should read: *Where is the Lord God of Elijah, even he? and he smote the waters and they were divided, etc.*

**15. Saw him**—The prophets saw all that was done at Jordan, and were thereby confirmed in the belief that Elisha was the divinely ordained successor of Elijah.

him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him. **16** And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty <sup>4</sup>strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: <sup>1</sup>lest peradventure the Spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon <sup>5</sup>some mountain, or into some valley. And he said, Ye shall not send. **17** And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not. **18** And when they came again to him, for he

tarried at Jericho, he said unto them, did I not say unto you, Go not?

**19** And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water *is* naught, and the ground <sup>6</sup>barren. **20** And he said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought *it* to him. **21** And he went forth unto the spring of the waters, and <sup>m</sup>cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren land.

<sup>4</sup> Heb. *sons of strength*.—21 Kings 18. 12; Ezek. 8. 3; Acts 8. 39.—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *one of the moun-*

*tains*.—<sup>6</sup> Hebrew, *causing to miscarry*.—<sup>m</sup> See Exod. 15. 25; chap. 4. 41; 6. 6; John 9. 6.

**16. Cast him upon some mountain**—The fifty men that stood afar off to view, (verse 7,) had perhaps seen that Elijah was suddenly snatched away from view, or else Elisha at once told them how his master had departed; but they could not fully believe that he had gone bodily to heaven. Their search to find him, however, was as fruitless and idle as the attempt of some moderns to explain away the idea of a bodily ascension into heaven.

#### ELISHA HEALS THE WATERS OF JERICHO, 19-22.

As we see in the translation of Elijah a type of Christ's ascension into heaven, so may we also see in the subsequent career of Elisha a type of the holy Apostolic Church, clothed with the spirit of the Master, and working even greater miracles than he.

**19. The men of the city**—Prominent citizens of the place. Perhaps, as Bähr says, they were the elders of the city who thus applied to Elisha, and their action shows that he had their confidence. As he had now attained the highest eminence in the prophetic office, they, possibly, expected that he might be able to rid their city of its plague. **Situation of this city is pleasant**—Travellers all agree in representing the site of Jericho as exceedingly beautiful. **The water is naught**—Bad, harmful. **The ground barren**—Better, *The land suffers from abortions, or causes untimely births.* הארץ, *the land*, refers here to the inhabitants, rather than the soil, and verse

21 shows that the bad waters caused the land to suffer from abortions.

**20. A new cruse**—Never used in any common or unholy service. **Put salt therein**—Elisha, in working this miracle, would seem to make use of means just as did Jesus when he put spittle on the blind man's eyes. John ix. 6; Mark viii. 23. "The injurious property and effect was not taken from the water by the salt poured in; for even if the salt actually possessed this power, a whole spring could not be corrected by a single dish of salt, even for one day, much less for a longer time, or forever. The pouring in of the salt was a symbolic act with which Elisha accompanied the word of the Lord, by which alone the spring was healed. Salt, on account of its power of preserving from putrescence and decay, is the symbol of incorruptibility, and of life removing death. The new dish was also a symbol of purity and inviolateness."—*Keil*.

**21. The spring of the waters**—The fountain bursts forth at the eastern foot of a high double mound, or group of mounds, situated a mile or more in front of the mountain Quarantania, and about thirty-five minutes from the modern village of Jericho. It is a large and beautiful fountain of sweet and pleasant water; not, indeed, cold, but also not warm. It is the only one near Jericho, and there is every reason to regard it as the scene of Elisha's miracle."—*Robinson*. **have healed these waters**—Not Elisha, but Elisha's God was the au

**22** So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake. **23** And he went up from thence unto Beth-el: and as he was

*n* Prov. 20. 11;

thor of that miraculous change in the mineral sources of the fountain. This miracle, says Wordsworth, "was typical of the work done by the Lord after the ascension of Christ, by means of the apostles and their successors casting the salt of Christian doctrine from the new cruse of the Gospel into the unhealthful waters of the Jericho of this world, and healing them." Compare with this miracle that of the healing of the poisonous pottage, chap. iv, 38-41, and the waters of Marah, Exod. xv, 25.

#### THE MOCKING CHILDREN CURSED, 23-25.

We pass from a miracle of blessing to a miracle of cursing. The one was wrought in the element of inanimate nature; the other, in that of human life. The one was wrought on unconscious water for the temporal benefit of the surrounding country; the other, on conscious and responsible persons to vindicate the honour of Jehovah, and teach a salutary moral lesson. "The offence of the mocking children, involving, as it did, a blasphemous insult upon one of the Lord's most signal acts, made a near approach to what in the New Testament is called the sin against the Holy Ghost. It became the Lord to vindicate his own honour among a people governed by sensible dispensations of judgments and of mercy; and it became him to vindicate the character and authority of his anointed prophet at the outset of his high career."—*Kitto*.

**23. Unto Beth-el**—Whence he had lately come down with Elijah, and where was a school of the prophets. Verse 3. **Little children**—Youths; persons who had attained to youthful manhood, as distinguished from the middle aged and the old. The word נַעַר is often used for a youth, without determining at all his exact age, and with קָטָן, *little*, means a young man who has not arrived at maturity, a lad.

going up by the way, there came forth "little children out of the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head.

22. 6, 15; Isa. 3. 5.

Compare 1 Sam. xx, 35; 1 Kings xi, 17.

לְרִימָה, rendered *children* in verse 24, is

often used in the same sense, and in 1 Kings xii, 8 is applied to the young men who had grown up with Rehoboam, in contrast with the old men who had acted as the counsellors of Solomon. So that by *little children*, here, we are not to understand infantile or irresponsible children, but young persons from fifteen to twenty or twenty-five years old. Some have plausibly conjectured that they composed the school of some teacher in that city. If so, the school was probably established to offset and counteract the influence of the school of the prophets in that place, and to advance the interests of the calf-worship, which had its principal seat at Beth-el. The pupils of such a school would naturally soon learn to mock and scoff at every holy person and thing connected with the true worship of Jehovah. They were, as Kitto says, "a rabble of young blackguards." **Go up**—That is, ascend into heaven. They had heard of Elijah's ascension, and were taught to treat the story with ridicule; and now when Elisha, the most distinguished follower of Elijah, is approaching the town, they go out on purpose to meet him and treat him with derision. **Bald head**—If Elisha were really bald headed, it was not the result of age, for he was yet a comparatively young man. But the word might have been applied to Elisha out of pure contempt, and not because he was actually bald. The term "was one of great indignity with the Israelites—baldness being usually seen among them as the effect of the loathsome disease of leprosy. It was a term of contempt, equivalent to calling him a mean, unworthy fellow, a social outcast. In this sense it is still used as a term of abuse in the farther East, and is often applied as such to men who have ample heads of hair."—*Kitto*.

**24** And he turned back, and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. **25** And he went from thence to mount °Carmel, and from thence he returned to Samaria.

### CHAPTER III.

**N**OW °Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Sa-

o Chap. 4. 25; 1 Kings 18. 10, 42.—a Chap. 1. 17.—1 Heb. *statue*.

**24. Cursed them in the name of the Lord**—It would not do to let such malice and blasphemy go unnoticed before the people of Beth-el, and so the insulted prophet called down on those young blasphemers the vengeance of the Lord who was mocked and scorned in the person of his holy prophet. It then remained to be seen whether the Lord would hear a prayer for vengeance. **Tare forty and two children of them**—The word for children here is different from that so rendered in verse 23, and though the two words are nearly synonymous, “the change, with the dropping of the word *little*, is probably intended to mark a distinction. Wherever there is a mob of idle young men, there is sure to be a number of mischievous urchins, who shout and bawl, as they do, without knowing much of the matter. Although, therefore, there were, no doubt, little children among this rabble of young Beth-elites, there is every reason to suppose that the *forty-two of them* who were destroyed were the oldest ones, the ringleaders of the set, and who very well knew what they were about.”—*Kitto*.

**25. Thence to mount Carmel... thence... to Samaria**—Thus he follows in the steps of his departed master, and frequents the scenes of that master's ministry.

### CHAPTER III.

**BEGINNING OF JEHORAM'S REIGN, 1-3.**

The chronology of Jehoram's reign is exceedingly involved and obscure. Some of the incidents recorded in the following chapters seem clearly out of their chronological order, and the

maria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. **2** And he wrought evil in the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the °image of Baal °that his father had made. **3** Nevertheless he cleaved unto °the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom.

**4** And Mesha king of Moab was a

b 1 Kings 16. 31, 32.—c 1 Kings 12. 28, 31, 32.

miracles of Elisha, which were mostly wrought during this reign, appear to have been written with reference to their moral suggestions, and their inner relation to one another, rather than with reference to the order in which they actually occurred. Accordingly in our notes on these chapters we have made no attempt to discuss or decide these questions of chronology.

**1. Jehoram the son of Ahab**—And brother of Ahaziah, who died prematurely from a fall from his upper chamber. Chap. i, 2, 17. With this Jehoram, or *Joram*, as he is often called, the dynasty of Omri came to an end. **Eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat**—See note on chap. i, 17.

**2. He put away the image of Baal**—Discountenanced, and at least partially abolished, the Baal worship that had gained such strength in Israel during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel. At what particular period of his reign he did this does not appear, but perhaps it was after the war with Moab, and in consequence of the rebuke of Elisha given at verse 13.

**3. He cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam**—That is, the calf-worship which Jeroboam established. His reformation was only partial. He turns from Tyrian idolatry, but worships still the idols at Beth-el and at Dan.

### THE WAR WITH MESHA, KING OF MOAB, 4-27.

Peculiar interest has become attached to the biblical history of Mesha, king of Moab, by reason of the recently discovered (1870) inscription of this king on a monumental stone at Dibon. To this we have already made reference

sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs, and a hundred thousand rams, with the wool. **5** But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. **6** And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel. **7** And he went and sent to

Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, the king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I will go up: *I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.* **8** And he said, Which way shall we go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness of Edom. **9** So

d See Isa. 16. 1.

e Chap. 1. 1.—f 1 Kings 22. 4.

in the note on 1 Kings xvi, 23. In the inscription Mesha claims to have captured a city from the king of Israel, and to have had various successes and victories, which we may suppose probably occurred during the reign of Ahaziah. The chief value of the inscription is the confirmation it affords to the Old Testament history. For an account of the discovery of this Moabite monument, together with translations and commentary, see *Recovery of Jerusalem*, pp. 389-402; *Bibliotheca Sacra*, for 1870, pp. 625-646.

**4. Sheepmaster**—The word is rendered *shepherd* in Amos i, 1, and, according to some writers, means literally *a marker*, and serves to designate a shepherd, because it was his custom to mark his sheep in order to distinguish them. Mesha was evidently rich in sheep, and the hills and valleys of Moab, like those of Gilead on the north, (Num. xxxii, 1,) were well adapted to the pasturage of numerous flocks and herds. **A hundred thousand lambs**—“Much curious information might easily be presented with respect to ancient, and even modern, tributes in cattle. A curious instance is that of the Cappadocians, of whom Strabo relates that they used to deliver every year, as tribute to the Persians, fifteen hundred horses, two thousand mules, and fifty thousand sheep. This Moabite tribute seems very heavy, and doubtless it was so felt by them while it lasted; but in the same degree was it valuable to the crown of Israel; and the internal taxation, to which resort must have been had to make up for this lapse of external revenue, doubtless made the expedition eventually undertaken for the purpose of reducing the Moabites, highly popular in Israel.”—*Kitto*. **A hundred thousand rams,**

**with the wool**—Literally, *A hundred thousand rams' wool*; that is, the wool of a hundred thousand rams. This number of rams would be, as many have remarked, a strange proportion for the number of lambs named; hence we understand with Thenius that the tribute was a hundred thousand *fat sheep* or *lambs*, (פָּרִים,) and the wool of an equal number of rams, but not the rams themselves. Some understand that the tribute of both lambs and rams was paid in wool.

**5. When Ahab was dead**—Immediately after the death of Ahab Mesha had thrown off the yoke, but not until the reign of Jehoram was an effort made to subdue the revolt. Ahaziah's sickness was the cause of this delay. See note on chap. i, 1.

**7. Sent to Jehoshaphat**—Whose son and successor, Jehoram, was brother-in-law to Jehoram king of Israel by marriage with Athaliah, daughter of Ahab. 2 Chron. xxi, 6. **I will go up**—In spite of the reproof of Jehu (2 Chron. xix, 2) for assisting Ahab in the war against Syria, Jehoshaphat repeats in substance the same act of joining Jehoram in battle against Moab. Perhaps, however, the interests of the kingdom of Judah demanded that Jehoshaphat should engage in this war with Moab, for the expedition of the combined armies of Moab, Ammon, and Edom against Jehoshaphat, which is narrated in 2 Chron. xx, had probably occurred before this time.

**8. Through the wilderness of Edom**—That is, around the southern end of the Dead Sea, so as to attack the Moabites from the south. This was a longer and more difficult route than to have crossed the Jordan at the north end of the Dead Sea, and thence pro-

the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey: and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle <sup>2</sup>that followed them. **10** And the king of Israel said, Alas, that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab! **11** But <sup>3</sup>Jehoshaphat said, *Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may in-*

quire of the Lord by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. **12** And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the Lord is with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom <sup>4</sup>went down to him. **13** And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, <sup>1</sup>What have I to do with thee? <sup>2</sup>get thee to <sup>1</sup>the prophets of thy father,

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *at their feet*; see Exodus 11. 8.  
<sup>3</sup> 1 Kings 22. 7.—*h* Chap. 2. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Ezekiel 14. 3.—*h* So Judges 10. 14; Ruth 1. 15.—*l* 1 Kings 18. 19.

ceeded southwards; but it was probably chosen with the hope of taking the enemy by surprise, as the Moabites would hardly expect an attack from Israel in that quarter.

**9. And the king of Edom**—One further object of journeying by the way of Edom may have been to secure the co-operation of this king, who was now at peace and in league with Judah, but who might have been strongly tempted to revolt if he had been ignored in this war for the subjugation of Moab. **No water for the host**—A calamity very likely to overtake a vast army in that desolate and barren section of the land.

**11. A prophet of the Lord**—Observe the different disposition of the two kings. Jehoram despairs; Jehoshaphat inquires of Jehovah. The idolatries of his father and mother had utterly unsettled the religion of Jehoram, but Jehoshaphat still cleaves to the God of Israel. **Here is**

**Elisha**—It seems that this prophet had accompanied or followed the host, and though not in the camp was near at hand. He had probably been instructed by the Lord to follow the host, so as to be ready to make known Jehovah's will and power. **Poured water on the hands of Elijah**—An Oriental expression denoting the usual office and work of a servant. After a meal in which knives and forks are not used "washing the hands and mouth is indispen-

sable, and the *ibrick* and *tusht*—their pitcher and ewer—are always brought, and the servant, with a napkin over his shoulder, pours water on your hands. If there is no servant, they perform this office for each other. Great men have those about them whose special business is to pour water on the hands."—*Thomson*.

**12. Went down to him**—They do not presume to summon Elisha into their presence, but, humbled in spirit, all three of the kings go down to him, thereby showing their respect and reverence for him, and their confidence in his gift of prophecy. He probably sat waiting for them in some neighbouring valley.

**13. Get thee to the prophets of thy father**—A proper respect for the true God of Israel demanded that Jehoram should then and there receive a severe rebuke, for though he had put



and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, **Nay**: for the LORD hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. **14** And Elisha said, <sup>m</sup>As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. **15** But now bring me <sup>n</sup>a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that <sup>o</sup>the hand of the LORD came upon him. **16** And he said, Thus saith the LORD, <sup>p</sup>Make this valley full of ditches. **17** For

<sup>m</sup> 1 Kings 17. 1; chap. 5. 16. — <sup>n</sup> See 1 Sam. 10. 5. — <sup>o</sup> Ezek. 1. 3; 3. 14, 22; 8. 1. — <sup>p</sup> Chap.

away the idols of his father, (verse 2,) he had not returned to the pure worship of Jehovah. **Nay**—Reproach me not, (such is the purport of his words,) for we all seem to be about to fall into the power of Moab.

**15. Bring me a minstrel**—The power of music to quell the passions, to tranquillize the mind, and to bring the soul into a devotional frame, is no strange fact. See note on 1 Sam. xvi, 16. The prophets of the schools carried with them instruments of music to aid them in their prophesying. (1 Sam. x, 5;) and here Elisha, whose spirit was ruffled by the presence of the idolatrous Jehoram, calls to his aid the sound of music, that its soft tones may bring his soul into harmony with the inner world of spiritual vision. **The hand of the Lord came upon him**—The expression often occurs in Ezekiel to denote the imparting of Divine energy, which qualified the prophet for his holy work.

**16. Make this valley full of ditches**—More literally, *Make this valley pits, pits*. The valley was one of the broad water courses at the southern end of the Dead Sea, and was at that time dry. These pits were to catch and hold the water which was about to come from the distant hills of Edom.

**17. Not see wind, neither...rain**—A storm of wind usually precedes a heavy rain; but in this case the storm was to occur so far away from the Israelitish encampment that they would see nothing of it.

**19. Fell every good tree**—This is by no means a mere prophecy, as

thus saith the LORD, <sup>a</sup>Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts. **18** And this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand. **19** And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city, and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water, and <sup>b</sup>mar every good piece of land with stones. **20** And it came to pass in the morning, when <sup>c</sup>the meat offering was offered, that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom,

<sup>a</sup> 3. — <sup>b</sup> *q* Psa. 107. 35; Isa. 41. 17, 18; 43. 19, 20; 48. 21. — <sup>c</sup> 3 Heb. *grieve*. — <sup>r</sup> Exod. 29. 39, 40.

Wordsworth says; a simple prediction of what the allied armies would inflict on Moab; but a command as plain and positive as that by which he had formerly authorized the destruction of the idolatrous Canaanites. So utter a destruction of the Moabites did the Lord now authorize that he even suspended the law of Deut. xx, 19, which forbade the destruction of the fruit-trees of the enemy. The Israelites were not to occupy the land of Moab, as they did the land of the Canaanites, and therefore they had no need to spare the fruit-trees for their own use. But this felling of the good trees would be to the surviving Moabites a memorable woe. Their ruined cities they might speedily rebuild, and unstop their wells, or dig new ones, and clear the land of stones, but years must pass before new fruit-trees could be reared. **Mar...land with stones**—Literally, *Grieve the land*. That is, afflict, disfigure, and injure the land by casting stones upon it so as to make it sterile. A vast host like that led by these three kings could speedily cover a field with stones.

**20. When the meat offering was offered**—That is, at sunrise. "Miraculous manifestations of God's mercy often take place at stated times of prayer, and thus God's approval of such appointments is shown."—*Wordsworth*. **There came water by the way of Edom**—There had been during the night a sudden and heavy fall of rain off among the mountains of Edom, where the valley in which the pits were dug took its rise; and so in the early

and the country was filled with water.

**21** And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they <sup>4</sup>gathered all that were able to <sup>5</sup>put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. **22** And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood: **23** And they said, This is blood: the kings are surely <sup>6</sup>slain, and they have smitten one another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil.

<sup>4</sup> Hebrew, *were cried together*.—<sup>5</sup> Hebrew, *gird himself with a girdle*.—<sup>6</sup> Hebrew, *destroyed*.

morning the floods came rushing down, and filled all the pits and the bed of the valley with water.

**22. Saw the water. . . red as blood**—"As the suddenly appearing mass of waters was effected in a natural way by a violent rain in the distance, so also the illusion, that was so fatal to the Moabites, is explained in a natural way, indicated even in the text. From the red earth of the pits the water collected in them had assumed a reddish colour, which was considerably increased by the rays of the rising sun falling upon it, so that, seen from the distance, it must have appeared like blood. But the Moabites might be the less disposed to think of an optical illusion, as by their familiar acquaintance with the region they knew that the wady had at that time no water, and they had seen or learned nothing of the rain which had fallen far from them in the Edomite mountains."—*Keil*.

**23. They have smitten one another**—The self-destruction of the allied armies of Moab, Ammon, and Edom, (see 2 Chron. xx, 22–25,) was still fresh in the minds of the Moabites; and knowing the enmity and jealousy existing between Judah and Israel, and confident that the Edomites were no fast friends of either party, they very naturally imagined, from the sight of what appeared so much blood, that the different kings had fallen out among themselves and destroyed each other. **To the spoil**—They supposed it only remained for them to go, as did Jehoshaphat on that former occasion, (2 Chron. xx, 25,) and gather up the

**24** And when they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but <sup>7</sup>they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in *their* country. **25** And they beat down the cities, and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: <sup>8</sup>only in *Kir-haraseth* left they the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and smote it. **26** And when the king of

<sup>7</sup> Or, *they smote in it even smiting*.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *until he left the stones thereof in Kirharaseth*.—s Isa. 16, 7, 11.

precious jewels and other spoil from among the dead bodies.

**25. Cast every man his stone**—A vast host could in this way quickly even bury a field with stones. Compare note on verse 19. **Stopped all the wells**—"Wells, dug at great expense, were regarded as very valuable possessions. Isaac was a great well-digger, prompted thereto by the necessity of his vast flocks. To stop up wells was the most pernicious and destructive species of vengeance, the surest way to convert a flourishing country into a frightful wilderness."—*Thomson*. **Kir-haraseth**—Called also *Kir-harash*, (Isa. xvi, 11,) *Kir-heres*, (Jer. xlviii, 31,) and *Kir of Moab*, (Isa. xv, 1.) Its modern name is *Kerak*. The spot has been visited and described by several travellers. It was the chief city of the Moabites, and is situated on a plateau of high land ten miles east of the southern end of the Dead Sea, and some three thousand feet above the level of its waters. It occupies the top of a steep hill, and is surrounded on all sides by deep and narrow valleys, beyond which tower up lofty hills, cutting off all prospect in the distance except towards the northwest, where the deep Wady Kerak opens a prospect to the Dead Sea, and, in a clear day, even to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The city is still enclosed by a partially ruined wall, flanked by seven massive towers. **Slingers went about it, and smote it**—From the surrounding hills, which overlook the city, they could hurl stones so as to smite many of the inhabitants.

Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom: but they could not. **27** Then he took his eldest

*1* Amos 2. 1.

**26. To break through unto the king of Edom**—He probably expected to receive less opposition from the king of Edom than from the other kings, and the Edomite forces were probably the weakest of the three armies that were encamped against the city.

**27. Took his eldest son**—His own son; not, as some have said, the son of the king of Edom. Amos ii, 1, has no reference to this occasion. Mesha's eldest son, and heir of the throne, must have been the dearest idol of his heart, and his sacrifice shows the utter despair to which he was driven. The rabbies say, that in his despair the king of Moab asked his servants how Israel could work such miracles, and was told that it was owing to Abraham's sacrifice of his only son at the command of God. He accordingly hastened to offer up his firstborn son, hoping to receive like favours of Heaven. **Offered him . . . upon the wall**—In sight of his own people and of all the hosts of the besiegers. The offering was doubtless made to the Moabitish god Chemosh, not to the God of Israel. Mesha supposed that his misfortunes were owing to the vengeance of his gods, whom he had in some way offended, and by this costly sacrifice he sought to propitiate them. Human sacrifices were common among many of the ancient heathen nations. The story of Iphigenia sufficiently shows the existence of the practice among the Greeks. It prevailed also among the Carthaginians, the Phenicians, and most of the nations in and around Palestine. Causing children to pass through fire to Molech (chap. xxiii, 10; Deut. xviii, 10) is an allusion to this abominable custom. Diodorus Siculus relates, that "when Agathocles was going to besiege Carthage the people, seeing the extremities to which they were reduced, ascribed their misfortunes to the anger of their god, in that

son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him *for a burnt offering* upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: "and they departed from him, and returned to *their own land*."

*2* Chap. 8. 20.

they had latterly spared to offer him children nobly born, and had fraudulently put him off with the children of slaves and foreigners. To make an atonement for this crime two hundred children of the best families in Carthage were at once offered in sacrifice, and no less than three hundred of the citizens voluntarily sacrificed themselves." Philo, in a fragment preserved by Eusebius, says: "It was a custom among the ancients, on occasions of great distress, for the rulers of a city or nation, instead of leaving the entire population to destruction, to sacrifice the beloved of their children as a ransom to the vengeful deities."

**There was great indignation against Israel**—That is, according to some interpreters, there was great wrath on the part of the besieged Moabites against Israel for having driven them to such a terrible extremity. But why should Moabitish indignation against Israel cause the latter to abandon the siege? Keil, on the contrary, understands that this indignation was the wrath of God against Israel, first for having driven Mesha to such an extremity as to occasion his offering a human sacrifice, and then for abandoning the siege and leaving the city unsubdued. But this absurdly assumes that God was angry with Israel partly for doing the very thing he had, by his prophet, commanded them to do; (see note on verse 19;) and surely Israel could not justly be held responsible for the immolation of Mesha's son. Then, further, the text clearly makes Israel's abandoning of the siege the consequence, not the cause, of the indignation. It is better, therefore, to take the word here rendered *against*, (*sy.*) in the sense of *over*. The meaning then would be: *Great indignation*—an intense feeling of horror at the sight of the terribly loathsome spectacle on the wall of Kir-haraseh—

## CHAPTER IV.

**N**OW there cried a certain woman of the wives of <sup>a</sup>the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come <sup>b</sup>to take unto him my two sons to be bond-

<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 20. 35.—<sup>b</sup> See Lev. 25. 39; Matt. 18. 25.

came over Israel; that is, pervaded the whole Israelitish army. **Departed from him**—From the king of Moab. They were so deeply disgusted with the king's horrible sacrifice that they felt no longer willing to stay and complete the subjugation of his capital, but turned away in utter loathing and contempt. Whether they were justifiable in thus abandoning the siege, the sacred writer does not say.

## CHAPTER IV.

This chapter, and the four that follow, are chiefly given to a detailed record of Elisha's miracles. They not only afford us a lively picture of Elisha himself, but also open to us an inside view of the schools of the prophets, in which Elisha was a father. These schools had now become a prominent institution in Israel; and the term *sons of the prophets*, so uniformly used, seems to indicate a more intimate relation between pupils and master than that which existed in the days of Samuel.

The general character of Elisha's life and miracles was noticeably different from that of Elijah's. As Stanley beautifully remarks: "The rough mantle of his master appears no more after its first display. He uses a walking-staff, (ver. 29,) like other grave citizens. He was not secluded in mountain fastnesses, but dwelt in his own house in the royal city, (chap. v, 9, 24; vi, 32; xiii, 17.) or lingered amidst the sons of the prophets within the precincts of ancient colleges, embowered amidst the shade of the beautiful woods which overhang the crystal spring near Jericho that is still associated with his name; or was sought out by admiring disciples in some tower on Carmel, or

men. **2** And Elisha said unto her, <sup>c</sup>What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. **3** Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, *even* empty vessels; <sup>d</sup> borrow not a few. **4** And when thou

<sup>c</sup> Acts 3. 6; 2 Cor. 6. 10.—<sup>d</sup> See chap. 3. 16. 1 Or, *scant not*.

by the pass of Dothan; or was received in some quiet balcony, overlooking the plain of Esdraelon, where bed and table and seat had been prepared for him by pious hands. Verse 10. His life was not spent, like his predecessor's, in unavailing struggles, but in wide spread successes. He was sought out, not as the enemy, but as the friend and counsellor of kings. His deeds were not of wild terror, but of gracious, soothing, homely beneficence, bound up with the ordinary tenor of human life." In short, we may say that Elisha's life and miracles were more like the still small voice that followed the whirlwind, the earthquake, and the fire of Elijah's ministry; less sublime and fearful, but greater in their influence for good.

## THE WIDOW'S OIL MULTIPLIED, 1-7.

**1. A certain woman**—According to a Rabbinical conjecture she was the wife of Obadiah, who fed the persecuted prophets in the days of Jezebel. 1 Kings xviii, 5. **Wives of the sons of the prophets**—So these prophetic schools were unlike the monasteries in which celibacy was enjoined. **Unto Elisha**—The head of the institution was applied to as a father and lord who had power to help her in her distress. **My two sons to be bondmen**—The law of Moses provided (Lev. xxv, 39-41) that, in case of poverty and inability to pay his debts, a man and his children might be sold, and remain in bondage until the next year of jubilee. Matt. xviii, 25, shows that this law was still in force in our Lord's time. This fact, thus incidentally introduced in the history of Elisha, shows that in his day the law of Moses was the basis of judicial and civil proceedings in the kingdom of Israel.

art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. **5** So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured out. **6** And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is not a vessel more.* **7** And the oil stayed. **7** Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy <sup>2</sup>debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

**8** And <sup>3</sup>it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to *Shunem*, where *was* a great woman; and she <sup>4</sup>constrained him to

<sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 17. 14.—<sup>2</sup> Or, *creditor*.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *there was a day*.—<sup>f</sup> Josh. 19. 18.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *laid hold on him*.

**4. Shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons**—So as not to draw a crowd of curious spectators round, or make a vain and needless display of the miracle. Some miracles God works in secret for a chosen few.

**6. The oil stayed**—"It only ceased to flow when there was no vessel to receive it. This is a good emblem of the grace of God. While there is an empty, longing heart, there is a continual overflowing fountain of salvation. If we find in any place, or at any time, that the oil ceases to flow, it is because there are no empty vessels there, no souls hungering and thirsting for righteousness."—*Clarke*. Compare 2 Cor. vi, 11, 12.

**7. Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt**—There is a resemblance between this miracle and that of our Lord when he sent Peter to catch a fish in whose mouth he should find money to pay the tribute. Matt. xvii, 27. In each case the miracle was to pay a debt, and was wrought, not publicly, but comparatively in secret.

Some of the ancient interpreters find in this widow an image of the Gentile Church. The husband being dead, signifies that she was no longer joined to her ancient idolatries. Her coming to Elijah and obeying his word is explained as a type of the eagerness with which the Gentiles sought salva-

eat bread. And so it was, *that*, as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. **9** And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this *is* a holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. **10** <sup>e</sup>Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither. **11** And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he turned into the chamber, and lay there. **12** And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had called her, she stood before him. **13** And he said unto him, Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care;

<sup>g</sup> Isaiah 32. 8; Matthew 10. 41, 42; 25. 40; Mark 9. 41; Romans 12. 13; Hebrews 13. 2; 1 Peter 4. 9, 10.

tion at the hands of Christ and his apostles; and the abundant supply of oil represents the bountiful provisions of the Gospel to deliver all nations from the bondage of sin.

#### ELISHA AND THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN, 8-37.

**8. Shunem**—The modern *Solam*, on the southwestern slope of the Little Hermon, and in full view of Mount Carmel, and in the midst of the finest cornfields of Palestine. Compare Josh. xix, 18. **A great woman**—That is, a woman of great wealth. Compare the expression in 1 Sam. xxv, 2. Some have thought that this woman was a relative of the fair Abishag. 1 Kings i, 3. **Constrained him to eat bread**—Persistently urged him, in accordance with the hearty manner of Oriental hospitality.

**10. Little chamber . . on the wall**—An *aliyah*, the most desirable and best fitted up room of an Eastern house. See note on 1 Kings xvii, 19. An upper chamber would be more retired than any other part of the house, and therefore especially appropriate for a prophet. **Bed . . . table . . . stool . . . candlestick**—Every accommodation for his convenience and comfort. The room was accordingly occupied at convenient times by the prophet and his attendant servant.

what *is* to be done for thee? wouldst thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, "I dwell among mine own people. **14** And he said, What then *is* to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old. **15** And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she stood in the door. **16** And he said, <sup>i</sup>About this <sup>a</sup>season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, *thou* man of God, <sup>a</sup>do not lie unto thine handmaid. **17** And the woman <sup>i</sup>conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life. **18** And when the child was

grown, it fell on a day, that he went out to his father to the reapers. **19** And he said unto his father, My head, my head! And he said to a lad, Carry him to his mother. **20** And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* <sup>m</sup>died. **21** And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went out. **22** And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again. **23** And he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither <sup>n</sup>ew moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be* <sup>a</sup>well.

<sup>h</sup> 1 Tim. 6. 6, 8; Heb. 13. 5.—<sup>i</sup> Gen. 18. 10, 14.  
—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *set time*.—<sup>k</sup> Verse 28.

<sup>l</sup> Gen. 21. 1; 1 Sam. 1. 19, 20; Ps. 113. 9; Luke 1. 24, 25, 36.—<sup>m</sup> Luke 7. 12.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *peace*.

**13. Wouldst thou be spoken for to the king**—Hast thou any difficulty or concern in which the interference of the king or the captain of the host would be of service to thee? or wouldst thou like a place of honour procured for thee at the king's court? The question implies that Elisha had great influence with the king; an influence obtained, doubtless, by means of the miracles which God had wrought through him. **I dwell among mine own people**—I live quietly and peaceably, and have no broils or difficulties with my neighbours requiring the interference of the king, and I have no desire to change my lot. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Tim. vi. 6.

**16. About this season, according to the time of life**—That is, about this time next year. **Embrace a son**—Fold in thy arms a child. To estimate the value of this promise we must remember that childlessness was a reproach and disgrace to an Israelitish wife. Compare Gen. xxx. 23; Luke i. 25.

**18. When the child was grown**—Large enough to go out by himself. **To the reapers**—In the neighbouring grain-fields. In June (16th, 1838.) Dr. Robinson passed through the grain-fields about Shunem, and wrote: "The fields in many parts were still covered with a rich crop of wheat, long ready and waiting for the sickle. The harvest in other quarters of the plain seemed

to be already ended. Our guide from Jenin took us directly through several fields of grain, where his doukey and our mules cropped their fill in passing."

**19. My head, my head**—He was probably sun struck, and this is the more likely in view of the season of the year, and of his own youth and tenderness. "I know by experience," says Thomson, "that this valley glows like a furnace in harvest-time."

**21. Laid him on the bed of the man of God**—She had probably heard how Elijah had raised the son of the widow of Zarephath to life. 1 Kings xvii. 19.

**22. She called unto her husband**—He seems to have stayed in the harvest field, not supposing any thing so serious in the case; and she seems to have concealed from him the death of the child.

**23. Neither new moon, nor sabbath**—These words imply that it was customary for the people on these holy days to resort to the prophets for help or instruction, and that the prophetic office had in Israel largely taken the place of the Levitical priesthood. The calf worship at Beth-el and Dan had utterly disorganized the lawful priesthood; and the regular worship of sacrifice and offering, as prescribed in the law, could not be observed in the northern kingdom, away from the ark and temple where Jehovah had recorded his name. Hence the pious

**24** Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; 'slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid thee. **25** So she went, and came unto the man of God <sup>a</sup>to mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant, Behold, *yonder* is that Shunammite: **26** Run now, I pray thee, to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child?* And she answered, *It is well.* **27** And when she came to the man of God to

the hill, she caught <sup>s</sup>him by the feet: but Gehazi came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said, Let her alone; for her soul <sup>v</sup>is vexed within her: and the Lord hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me. **28** Then she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? <sup>v</sup>did I not say, Do not deceive me? **29** Then he said to Gehazi, "Gird up thy loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way: if thou meet any man, <sup>r</sup>salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again: and <sup>r</sup>lay my staff upon the face of the child.

<sup>7</sup> Hebrew, *restrain not for me to ride.*—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 2. 25.—<sup>o</sup> 1 Sam. 3. 18; Job 1. 21, 22; Psal. 39. 9.—<sup>s</sup> Heb. *by his feet*, Matt. 28. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. *bitter*, 1 Sam. 1. 10.—<sup>p</sup> Verse 16.—<sup>q</sup> 1 Kings 18. 46; chap. 9. 1.—<sup>r</sup> Luke 10. 4.—<sup>s</sup> Exod. 7. 19; 14. 16; chap. 2. 8, 14; Acts 19. 12.

were wont to resort to the prophets on the holy days, and perhaps the schools of the prophets answered partially the purpose of the synagogues of a later age. Hence this Shunammite's husband asks her why she will go to inquire or seek help of the prophet on a day when the prophets were not wont to be inquired of. The fact that the new moons and the sabbaths were still religiously observed, shows that though there were many wide departures from the law of Moses, that law was not unknown in Israel. Comp. Lev. xxiii, 3; Num. xxviii, 11.

**25. She went, and came . . . to Mount Carmel**—Some ten or twelve miles from Shunem, a distance which she doubtless travelled in a few hours.

**27. She caught him by the feet**—"This scene is natural and very graphic. If you ask after a person whom you know to be sick, the reply at first will invariably be, *Well, thank God*, even when the very next sentence is to inform you that he is dying. Then the falling down, clasping the feet, etc., are actions witnessed every day. I have had this done to me often before I could prevent it. So, also, the officious zeal of the wicked Gehazi, who would thrust the broken-hearted mother away, probably thinking her touch pollution, agrees perfectly with what we know of the man and of the customs of the East."—*Thomson.* **The Lord hath hid it from me**—The prophets were not always illumined with the gift of foresight or of vision. They were not always "in the Spirit."

**28. Did I desire a son of my lord**

—She speaks the emotional language of one that is bewildered with a sudden sorrow. So far as appears from what is here written, she did not relate the fact of the child's death, but left him to infer it from the language of her grief, or learn it by special Divine revelation. But we need not assume that all she said to Elisha is here written.

**29. If thou meet . . . salute him not**

—As though he had said, "You will have no time to linger, and a pausing to give or receive compliments may not only cause much waste of time, but so distract your thoughts as to frustrate the object of your mission." When a miracle is wrought through many intermediate instruments and agencies it is necessary that those instruments be in perfect unison with each other, and in sympathy and harmony with the mind and will of Him with whom alone is the power to work miracles. **Lay my staff upon the face of the child**—Did Elisha expect that the child would be raised by this means? The Scripture does not say, and all attempts to answer this question must be at best merely conjectural. Keil thinks that Elisha sent Gehazi, not expecting that he would raise the child, but to show the Shunammite, and perhaps Gehazi also, that the power to work a miracle did not lie magically in himself or his staff, but solely in the power of God, exerted in answer to the prayer of faith. It is possible, however, that the failure was owing to the unfitness of Gehazi to work his part of the miracle, or to

**30** And the mother of the child said, 'As the LORD liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And he arose, and followed her. **31** And Gehazi passed on before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice, nor <sup>10</sup> hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him,

*f* Chap. 2. 2.—10 Heb. *attention*.—*u* John 11.

the fact that after Elisha had given this command to Gehazi and sent him away, he changed his mind and went himself with the woman. See more on **verse 31**.

**30. I will not leave thee**—After the heartless attempt of Gehazi to thrust her away from the prophet's presence, (verse 27,) she has no confidence in his ministry, even though he carry the staff of Elisha. Sacred vestments and a holy commission will not command the confidence of earnest souls, unless they be associated with a minister who himself gives evidence of a true and tender heart.

**31. Neither voice, nor hearing**

—He uttered no cry, he paid no heed. That is, he gave no signs of life. Here again comes up the question, Why was Gehazi's mission with the staff a failure? First of all, we maintain that it is far from certain or evident that Elisha expected his staff and his servant would be effectual in raising the dead. On the contrary, it is very possible that he meant Gehazi's mission should be a failure, in order to show that the miracle could not be wrought by any supposed magic of the staff, or by any mere human agency whatever. But on the other supposition, certainly admissible, and even probable, that the prophet expected his staff to resuscitate the child, the failure is thus well explained by Kitto: "Elisha did not at first mean to go himself to Shunem, and for that reason sent his staff to supply the lack of his own presence. But after he had sent away the servant, his observation of the uneasiness of the mother, whom he had expected to have gone home satisfied, and her avowed determination not to leave him, induced him to alter his purpose, and with the kindness natural to him, to forego his own engagements at

and told him, saying, The child is "not awaked. **32** And when Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed. **33** He <sup>11</sup> went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, "and prayed unto the Lord. **34** And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his

*11*.—*v* Verse 4; Matt. 6. 6.—*w* 1 Kings 17. 20.

Carmel, and to accompany her to her forlorn home. It was probably in consequence of this change of plan that no response was made to the first claim of faith by means of the staff. That appeal was in fact superseded the moment he resolved to go in person, the Lord thus reserving for the personal intercession of his prophet the honour of this marvellous deed."

But Gehazi's supposed unfitness to work the miracle, and the woman's lack of faith in him, are facts not to be overlooked. They may be a sufficient reason for the failure of Gehazi's mission. For in the realm of the miraculous Divine Power works not blindly nor arbitrarily, but according to sacred laws. To affirm that there must be a sympathetic union or spontaneous affiliation between the human agencies employed and those deeply concerned in a given miracle, is only to say what is abundantly suggested in the Scriptures. Nor is this to degrade a class of miracles to the low plane of animal magnetism, or explain them away on naturalistic principles; yet it need not be denied that the psychological basis of animal magnetism was a medium through which many miracles were performed, and without which some miracles could not have been wrought. When the disciples, after their failure to heal a lunatic child, asked Jesus why they could not work the miracle, he replied, "Because of your unbelief," Matt. xvii, 20. Compare Matt. xiii, 58; Mark vi, 56; ix, 23.

**32. The child was dead**—This statement, as well as that of verse 20, clearly forbids the supposition that the child had merely fainted, or fallen into a trance. He was really, not merely apparently, dead.

**34. Lay upon the child**—He knew what Elijah had done in a similar case,

mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and <sup>2</sup> he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. **35** Then he returned, and walked in the house <sup>11</sup> to and fro; and went up, <sup>7</sup> and stretched himself upon him: and <sup>2</sup> the child sneezed seven

times, and the child opened his eyes **36** And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. **37** Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and <sup>a</sup> took up her son, and went out.

∞ 1 Kings 17. 21; Acts 20. 10.—11 Heb. *once hither, and once thither.*

∇ 1 Kings 17. 21.—∞ Chap. 8. 1, 5.—a 1 Kings 17. 23; Heb. 11. 35.

(1 Kings xvii, 21.) and followed his example; but doubtless both Elijah and Elisha used these natural measures in accordance with some Divine revelation which was given them. **His mouth upon his mouth**—This was designed to convey his own animal warmth to the dead child. He would thus use the natural means which God might make instrumental in working that which lay altogether beyond the power of Elisha. This placing of his mouth, eyes, and hands upon those of the child, bore the same relation to this miracle which the spittle and the washing in Siloam did to the miracle by which Jesus gave sight to the man blind from his birth. John ix, 1–7. Divine Power could have raised this child to life in answer to Elisha's prayer without any other action on the part of the prophet, but Divine Wisdom decreed otherwise. Christ opened one blind man's eyes by a single command; but in other cases he adopted peculiar measures to work substantially the same miracle. We cannot tell why, but we accept the facts, and argue from them the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. Rom. xi, 33. We do not presume to deny that our God might have adopted a different plan of redemption from the one we have, but we may well question the possibility of a wiser one; and though we cannot fathom all its mystery, we accept with joy the fact of "God manifest in the flesh;" and in the blessed incarnation of our Lord, to use the analogy of this miracle of Elisha, we see with wonder how the Godman stretches himself upon our cold, lifeless humanity, that was dead in trespasses and sins, and even contracts himself to the narrow span of our infancy, childhood, manhood; his blessed mouth and eyes and

hands come into contact with our own. He breathes upon us the Holy Ghost, and we are quickened and warmed into a new and eternal life. We are thus raised from spiritual death, and our ears hear, and our eyes see, and our hands handle, the Word of life. 1 John i, 1. **The flesh of the child waxed warm**—Thus the miracle was wrought, not instantaneously, but by slow degrees.

**35. Returned, and walked in the house**—That is, he left the child, and went down stairs, and paced to and fro in a larger room than his own little chamber. His own animal heat might have become much reduced by absorption into the cold body of the child, and his walking to and fro was probably, as Bähr suggests, an involuntary result of the great emotion with which he looked and waited for the fulfillment of his prayer. **Went up**—Up stairs again into his own room. He went up and repeated his former efforts again. **Sneezed seven times**—"When the nervous influence began to act on the muscular system, before the circulation could be in every part restored, particular muscles, if not the whole body, would be thrown into strong contractions and shiverings, and sneezing would be a natural consequence; particularly as obstructions must have taken place in the head and its vessels, because of the disorder of which the child died."—Clarke.

As might be expected, there have not been wanting rationalistic interpreters, who have explained this miracle as a case of suspended animation, or fit of apoplexy, and Elisha's efforts as the manipulations of animal magnetism, by which sensation was restored. Of course, such expositors ignore or

**38** And Elisha came again to <sup>b</sup> Gilgal: and *there was a* <sup>c</sup> dearth in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* <sup>d</sup> sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. **39** And one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full,

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 2. 1. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 8. 1. — <sup>d</sup> Chap. 2. 3; Luke 10. 39; Acts 22. 3.

deny the plain statement that the child was dead, and so do not explain, but contradict and torture the word of Scripture.

#### THE POISONOUS POTTAGE HEALED, 38-41.

This miracle of the healing of the poisonous pottage is a counterpart of that of the healing of the waters of Jericho. Chapter ii, 19-22. There the power of Elisha's God works on the water; here, on the food of the prophets. The chief value of both miracles lies in the rich typical lessons they suggest concerning the coming in of Divine grace and power into the domain of man's most common life and wants, to leaven and heal with gracious influences all the disturbances and bitternesses of earthly experience.

**38. Came... Gilgal**—Where was a school of the prophets. See note on chap. ii, 1. **A dearth in the land**—The seven ears' famine which Elisha had foretold. Chap. viii, 1. This is mentioned to show the necessity of their sending out into the fields to gather herbs for food. **Sitting before him**—As disciples were wont to gather round their master to listen to the instructions which fell from his lips. **Set on the great pot**—That is, put it over the fire. The great pot is mentioned as a well known, commonly used article among them. **Seethe pottage**—Boil vegetables.

**39. Herbs** — אֲרָבָה, *oroth*. "This noun is derived from אָרַר, in the signification to shine, glitter, so far as verbs of shining are also applied metaphorically to blossoming, sprouting, ripening."—*Fürst*. Whether the word means some particular vegetable, or stands for herbs in general, is not settled.

and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not. **40** So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, *there is* <sup>e</sup> death in the pot. And they could not eat *thereof*. **41** But he said, Then bring meal. And <sup>f</sup> he cast *it* into the pot;

<sup>e</sup> Exod. 10. 17. — <sup>f</sup> See Exod. 15. 25; chap. 2. 21; 5. 10; John 9. 6.

Perhaps *oroth* were a sort of vegetable for which wild gourds might be easily mistaken. **Wild gourds**—One species of that extensive family of cucumber-like vegetables, abundant in the East, some of which are edible and some bitter and poisonous. Of one of these species Kitto says: "In the desert part of Syria, Egypt, and Arabia, and on the banks of the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, its tendrils run over vast tracts of ground, offering a prodigious number of gourds, which are crushed under foot by camels, horses, and men. In winter we have seen the extent of many miles covered with the connecting tendrils and dry gourds of the preceding season, the latter exhibiting precisely the same appearance as in our shops; and when crushed, with a crackling noise, beneath the feet, discharging, in the form of a light powder, the valuable drug which they contain." **Shred them**—Sliced them; cut them up into small shreds or slices.

**40. Death in the pot**—That is, some deadly poison. We need not suppose that there was any thing really poisonous in the pot, but the extreme bitterness of the wild gourds, which had been mistaken for *oroth*, caused their alarm, and they at once supposed that the pottage was really poisoned.

**41. Then bring meal**—What was there in the meal to counteract the bad properties of the gourds? Nothing, necessarily. The meal, like the salt cast into the foul waters of Jericho, (chap. ii, 21,) and the tree at Marah, (Exod. xv, 25,) was merely the suggestive symbol of the Divine powers of nourishment and healing which subsisted in Elisha's God. It bore a similar relation to this miracle that Eli-

and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no <sup>12</sup>harm in the pot.

**42** And there came a man from \*Baal-shalisha, <sup>13</sup>and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn <sup>14</sup>in the

<sup>12</sup> Hebrew, *evil thing*.—*g* 1 Sam. 9. 4.—*h* 1 Sam. 9. 7; 1 Cor. 9. 11; Gal. 6. 6.

shia's stretching himself upon the body of the dead child did to the Divine power that raised the child to life. It was the earthly medium through which the Spirit worked. **No harm in the pot**—All the bad properties of the pottage were miraculously taken away. So, say some of the older divines, the healthsome meal of sound Christian doctrine, entering into the mind and heart of the Church, shall counteract and take away the poison of ill-born heresy.

#### THE MIRACULOUS FEEDING OF A HUNDRED MEN, 42-44.

From the miracle of the healing of the bitter pottage it is appropriate to pass immediately to one by which a few barley loaves and ears of corn are made to supply the wants of many. As the one suggests the power of Divine truth to counteract the evils of heresy, the other may represent that not only must heresy in the Church be offset with truth, but, to keep out heresy, the Church must be abundantly fed with the true bread from heaven, which giveth life unto the world. This miracle makes us think of that of Christ in feeding the thousands that gathered round him; but in this case Elisha's agency, unlike Christ's, is noticeably in the background.

**42. There came a man**—Probably while Elisha still abode at Gilgal, and very soon after the last-mentioned miracle. This man was one of the pious in Israel who did not acknowledge the priests of the calf-worship at Beth-el and Dan. **Baal-shalisha**—This was either identical with "the land of Shalisha," mentioned in 1 Sam. ix. 4, or else a city of that district. According to Eusebius and Jerome, it lay some fifteen miles north of Lydda, or Diospolis, the modern *Ludd*, and hence

husk thereof. And he said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. **43** And his servitor said, 'What, should I set this before a hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord, <sup>15</sup>They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*. **44** So

<sup>13</sup> Or, *in his scrip*, or, *garment*.—*i* Luke 9. 13; John 6. 9.—*k* Luke 9. 17; John 6. 11.

somewhere near, if not at, the site of the present ruins *Khurbet Hatta*, and therefore about twenty miles west of Gilgal. Near this spot three water-courses unite in the large *Wady Kurawa*, and hence Thenius conjectures the origin of the name Shalisha, *land of three*. It was also, perhaps, a seat of the Baal-worship instituted by Jezebel. **Brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits**—The law ordained that the firstfruits should be given to the priests, (Num. xviii. 13; Deut. xviii. 4;) why, then, are these now brought to Elisha? Doubtless because the legal priesthood had been abolished in the northern kingdom, (see 2 Chronicles xi. 14.) and the Lord had raised up the prophetic office to such a religious power and importance as virtually to take its place. **Full ears of corn in the husk thereof**—Rather, *Garden fruits in his sack*. That is, says Gesenius, "the produce of gardens, as earlier and more valued than those of the fields; just as with us the finer species of fruits and herbs are cultivated in gardens, and are superior to those growing in the fields. We may perhaps understand *grits*, or *groats*, made from the new and earliest grain, in preparing which, as an offering to God, the best and earliest ears were selected from *garden wheat* or other grain."

**43. His servitor**—His minister; attendant. Probably Gehazi. **This before a hundred men**—Do you expect me to feed a hundred with these few loaves, which are barely sufficient for us? Compare Luke ix. 13; John vi. 9. Here was not only an expression of surprise, but it was prompted by a Judas-like feeling of covetousness on the part of Gehazi, who would keep all for himself. **They shall eat, and shall leave**—This word of the Lord

he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord.

#### CHAPTER V.

**N**OW <sup>a</sup>Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was <sup>b</sup>a great

<sup>l</sup> Matt. 14. 20; 15. 37; John 6. 13. — <sup>a</sup> Luke 4. 27.  
<sup>b</sup> Exod. 11. 3. — <sup>l</sup> Heb. *before*.

shows that the miracle was not wrought by the prophet, but by a Divine power far beyond him and above him. But by this miracle God honoured him, and strengthened the faith of the people. Here, says Wordsworth, "is a specimen of the work of Christ in apostolic Churches, receiving the alms of the faithful at God's altar, and seeking for true riches by bestowing those offerings, blessed by God with increase, to the benefit of his people."

#### CHAPTER V.

##### THE LEPROSY OF NAAMAN CLEANSED, 1-19.

Of all Elisha's miracles of blessing, this cleansing of Naaman's leprosy was the only one he wrought upon a heathen. His other mighty works of healing or benediction affected persons and families in Israel. It was fitting that one famous miracle of healing should be wrought upon a foreigner; a miracle conveying rich moral lessons for all nations and all ages. Naaman's cure, affected by his meeting the conditions of the word of the Lord through Elisha, is a standing type of salvation from sin by the Gospel.

There were many Israelitish lepers in Elisha's time, but they were not cleansed, because they sought not unto the God of Elisha. Naaman, the Syrian, manifests a faith not to be found in Israel, and is cleansed. He thus prefigured the Gentiles of a later age, who eagerly asked and received the salvation of God from which many a Jew was cut off because of their unbelief. Compare Luke iv, 27.

1. **Naaman** — According to some of the rabbies, he was the man who drew the bow and unintentionally killed Ahab, king of Israel. Kings xxii, 34. Josephus, in giving account of Ahab's death, makes the same statement, but

man <sup>1</sup>with his master, and <sup>2</sup>honourable, because by him the Lord had given <sup>3</sup>deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, *but he was a leper*. <sup>2</sup> And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought

2 Or, *gracious*. Heb. *lifted up*, or, *accepted in countenance*. — 3 Or, *victory*.

makes no mention of Naaman's leprosy, or its cure by Elisha. **Captain of the host... of Syria**—Commander-in-chief of the Syrian army. **A great man with his master**—That is, greatly prized, loved, and revered by his king. In Benhadad's court there was no man so great as Naaman. **By him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria**—That is, by some great and famous exploit Naaman had won a memorable victory for the Syrians. Perhaps the very exploit which had secured him this fame and honour with the king was his shooting Ahab. **A mighty man in valour**—A valiant warrior. He was every inch a soldier, and had gained his honours by valour as well as by fortune. **But he was a leper**—And this cast a shadow over all his greatness. "Every man," says Henry, "has some *but* or other in his character; something that blemishes and diminishes him; some alloy to his grandeur, some damp to his joy; he may be very happy, very good, yet, in something or other, not so good as he should be, nor so happy as he would be. Naaman was as great as the world could make him, and yet the basest slave in Syria would not change skins with him." In Syria the leprosy was no bar to human society, nor to offices of trust and honour; but in Israel the leper was made to dwell alone, and could not mingle in society. Compare Lev. xiii, 46; Num. v, 2; 2 Chron. xxvi, 21. The leprosy is a significant type of sin and spiritual impurity; and how many there are of great worldly honour and power, having all of earth that heart need wish, while in spirit they are lepers!

2. **By companies**—In troops; marauding parties that roved out in the Israelitish territory in quest of plunder. **A little maid**—Like Joseph in Egypt, and Daniel in Babylon, this

away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. **3** And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy. **4** And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel. **5** And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. **6** And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have therewith sent Naaman my servant

to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. **7** And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? Wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me. **8** And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. **9** So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha.

4 Heb. *was before*.—5 Heb. *before*.—6 Heb. *gather in*.—c 1 Sam. 9. 8; chap. 8. 8, 9.

7 Heb. *in his hand*.—d Gen. 30. 2; Deut. 32. 39; 1 Sam. 2. 6.—e Ezek. 2. 5.

captive girl becomes the instrument of making Jehovah known among the heathen.

**3. Recover him of his leprosy**—Literally, *he would gather him from his leprosy*. The expression is an allusion to the Israelitish custom of shutting lepers out of the camp, and gathering them in again after their leprosy was healed. The same expression is used of Miriam's reception into the camp after her exclusion of seven days. Num. xii, 14.

**5. I will send a letter**—A letter of introduction; also stating Naaman's affliction, and requesting the king's services in his behalf. See verse 6. **Ten talents of silver**—About seventeen thousand dollars. **Six thousand pieces of gold**—Probably gold shekels are meant, and if so, their value would have been about thirty-four thousand dollars. **Ten changes of raiment**—Costly robes, to be worn on great occasions, and of which the Orientals are very fond. These presents were all exceedingly valuable, and show the power and riches of Naaman, and his willingness to go to any pains and expense in order to be healed.

**6. That thou mayest recover him of his leprosy**—The letter made no mention of the prophet Elisha. The king of Syria presumed that Elisha's fame and power to work miracles was known throughout Samaria, and especially to Jehoram, and he seems to

have imagined that the king of Israel had entire control over his prophets, and their miraculous powers.

**7. Am I God**—As much as to say: Who but God can cure the leprosy? Who but He who has all power over human life? In his unbelief and carelessness Jehoram had forgotten that there was a man in his kingdom through whom God worked miracles. **Seeketh a quarrel**—Jehoram fails to see the hand of God in all this; his worldly spirit discerns only a stratagem to break the peace between the two nations. He imagines Ben-hadad will ask an impossible thing of him, and then, because he cannot work a miracle for him, will war against him. His obtuseness is equal to Ben-hadad's ignorance.

**8. Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes**—Why yield to such frenzy of emotion and alarm? Hast thou forgotten the miracle in the wilderness of Edom, (see chap. iii, 13, 18,) and wilt thou still be stubbornly ignorant that there is a prophet in Israel through whom God works?

**9. Came with his horses and... chariot**—In great pomp and state. And he expected that Elisha would show respect for the evidences of royal favour with which he was accompanied. **The house of Elisha**—The prophet seems to have had a residence of his own in the city of Samaria. Compare chap. vi, 32.

**10** And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go and 'wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. **11** But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold, <sup>8</sup>I thought, He

will surely come out to me, and stand, and call on the name of the Lord his God, and <sup>9</sup>strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper. **12** *Are* not <sup>10</sup>Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters

<sup>f</sup> See chapter 4. 41; John 9. 7.—8 Or, *I said with myself, He will surely come out, &c.*

Hebrew, *I said*.—9 Hebrew, *move up and down*.—10 Or, *Amana*.

**10. Sent a messenger**—He would not respect Naaman's pride enough to do him the honour of going out to him in person. It was his purpose to humble the proud spirit of the Syrian soldier. **Wash in Jordan seven times**—This command was another measure designed to humble Naaman even more than the neglect of the prophet to come out of his house to see him. So the very simplicity of the Gospel is a stumbling block to the proud.

**11. Naaman was wroth**—He was every inch a soldier, and not wont to be treated with indifference like this. The manner of his reception at the prophet's house seemed to him utterly contemptuous. **I thought**—He had pictured in his own mind a reception worthy of a king. He was exalted in his own eyes, and had marked out in his own fancy a mode of cure to suit himself. So with many who presume to seek the grace of God in the Gospel. They form in their own minds plans and measures by which they would fain receive God's blessings of salvation, but the Lord has them in derision.

**12. Abana**—The main stream by which the plain of Damascus is fertilized, and bears now the name *Barada*. "It rises in the high plain south of Zebedany, on Anti-Lebanon, where I afterwards visited its fountains, and rushes in a southeasterly course down the mountain till it issues upon the plain. Here it turns eastward, and flowing along the north wall of the city, takes its way across the plain to the northern lakes. It is a deep, broad, rushing mountain stream; and although not less than nine or ten branches are taken from it for the supply of the city and the plain, yet it still flows on as a large stream, and enters the middle lake by two chan-

nels. The water is limpid and beautiful."—*Robinson*. **Pharpar**—The modern *Awaj*, that flows some distance south of Damascus. Its sources, course, and the lake into which it empties, were first explored by J. L. Porter in the year 1852. He says, "It has two principal sources, one high up on the eastern side of Hermon, just beneath the central peak; the other in a wild glen a few miles southward. The streams unite near Sasa, and the river flows eastward in a deep rocky channel, and falls into a lake about four miles south of the lake into which the Barada falls. Although the Awaj is eight miles distant from the city, yet it flows across the whole plain of Damascus; and large ancient canals drawn from it irrigate the fields and gardens almost up to the walls. The total length of the Awaj is nearly forty miles, and in volume it is about one fourth that of the Barada. The Barada and the Awaj are the only rivers of any importance in the district of Damascus, and there can be little doubt that the former is the Abana, and the latter the Pharpar." **Better than all the waters of Israel**—It was natural for the Syrian captain to prefer the streams of his own land to those of an enemy's country. The Jordan is described by Robinson as "a deep, sluggish, discoloured stream;" and as it flows in its deep bed through wild, desolate jungles, until it empties into the Dead Sea, Naaman might have thought it a useless river in comparison with those limpid rivers of Damascus, which, flowing through the great plain, change it from a desert to a paradise. "Once and again," writes Tristram, "we crossed the Barada (Abana) by low bridges; and as we beheld its fertilizing powers, and recalled the barren sides of Jordan, we could not but

of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. **13** And his servants came near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do* some great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it*? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? **14** Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and *his* flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and *he*

was clean. **15** And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* *no* God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take *a* blessing of thy servant. **16** But he said, *As* the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, "I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*," but he refused. **17** And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for

¶ 1 Cor. 1. 21, 27.—*h* Job 33. 25.—*i* Luke 4. 27.  
*k* Dan. 2. 47; 3. 29; 6. 26, 27.

l Gen. 33. 11.—*m* Chap. 3. 14.—*n* Gen. 14. 23;  
 see Matt. 10. 8; Acts 8. 18, 20.

sympathize with the natural feeling of Naaman." **Went away in a rage**—"Carnal minds," says Wordsworth, "despise the foolishness of preaching, and the simplicity of the sacraments. They look on the Christian Jordan with Syrian eyes. But the true believer knows that one drop of water, set apart by the Divine ordinance of God, has more virtue than all the Abanas and Pharpar of the world."

**13. My father**—A form of address peculiar to an intimate and confidential servant, who might have great power over his master.

**14. His flesh came again**—Whether Naaman began to be cured at the first washing, and gradually lost his leprosy as he continued to wash, or whether the cure was instantaneously wrought at the last washing, we are not informed. In either case the means prescribed by the prophet were thoroughly effectual, and showed Naaman that his cure was effected, not by a magical touch of the prophet, but by the living God of Israel.

**15. He returned**—Deeply humbled, and filled with adoring gratitude to the mighty God who had wrought his cure. **No God... but in Israel**—Not even in Syria, but in Israel alone, is there any God worth worshipping! A little before he had boasted of the rivers of Damascus, but he cannot henceforth reverence her gods.

**16. I will receive none**—It seems to have been a custom for the prophets to receive presents from those who consulted them, (1 Sam. ix. 7.) and it would appear from chap. viii. 8, 9 that

on another occasion Elisha himself received a present from the king of Syria; why, then, did he refuse to accept one from Naaman? Some say because Naaman did not offer his present until after his cure, and thereby showed no little disrespect to the prophet; but a better reason is found in Elisha's own words, verse 26, "Is it a time to receive money and garments," etc. It was a time of hypocrisy and avarice among the professed prophets and priests in the northern kingdom, and this fact brought the sacred office into disrepute and contempt among the people. It was wise, therefore, for Elisha, in connexion with this great miracle of healing, to decline the rich present of Naaman, so that all might know that the mighty works of God's grace were free, and that avarice dwelt not in the heart of the true prophet of Jehovah.

**17. Two mules' burden of earth**—Though convinced that there was no God in all the earth but in Israel, (verse 15,) he could not yet divest himself of the polytheistic notion that each land had its particular divinity, who could be appropriately worshipped only on his own soil. 1 Kings xx. 23. He therefore wished to carry home with him a part of the sacred soil of Israel, not merely for the purpose of building an altar with it, though this may have been a part of his plan, but also that he might spread it out near his own home and worship Jehovah on it there. He would thus, though in Syria, be worshipping on Israelitish soil, and he supposed that his devotions would for

thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. **18** In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and "he lean-

o Chap. 7. 2, 17.—11 Heb. *a little*

eth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. **19** And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him "a little way.

that reason be more acceptable to the God of Israel. This thought is illustrated by the reverence Mohammedans have for the soil of sacred localities. "To the Mohammedans at the present day," says Kitto, "the sacred soil is that of Mecca; and the man accounts himself happy who has in his possession the smallest portion of it for use in his devotions. He carries it about his person in a small bag; and in his prayers he deposits this before him upon the ground in such a manner that, in his frequent prostrations, the head comes down upon this morsel of sacred soil, so that in some sort he may be said to worship thereon."

**18. Pardon thy servant**—Here is truly an example of one asking pardon, or at least apologizing, for an offence he is yet to commit. But the peculiar nature of the offence is to be taken into consideration, and it must not be assumed that Elisha sanctioned his purposes. See on verse 19. **My master**—The king of Syria. **Goeth into the house of Rimmon**—The temple erected in honour of this Syrian deity, and in which the idol was pompously worshipped. This is the only scriptural mention of this Syrian deity, but traces of the name appear in *Tabrimon* (1 Kings xv, 18) and *Hadadrimmon* Zech. xii, 11. As to the origin and signification of the name no settled opinion can well be formed. As Rimmon (רִמּוֹן) signifies *a pomegranate*,

some have thought this deity was the emblem or personification of some fertilizing principle in nature, and hence presenting a relic of the ancient tree-worship of the East. Others take Rimmon to be "the abbreviated form of Hadadrimmon, Hadad being the sun-god of the Syrians. Combining this with the pomegranate, which was his symbol, Hadadrimmon would then be the sun-god of the later summer, who

piece of ground, as Gen. 35, 16.

ripens the pomegranate and other later fruits, and, after infusing into them his productive power, dies, and is mourned with the 'mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.'" Zechariah xii, 11. But Selden, Gesenius, and others, derive the word from the root רָם, or רָמַם, *to be high*, and understand it as the name of the supreme Syrian god, the "most high." **He leaneth on my hand**—That is, Naaman attended the king when he went to worship, and assisted him when necessary in the performance of peculiar ceremonies. **I bow myself**—As it had been one duty of Naaman, as the king's adjutant, to accompany his master into the temple of Rimmon, he had, of course, been accustomed to show all proper respect and reverence for the place and the worship. When his master bowed, he bowed; and now when he returns to his master he expects to be required to perform the same service still. He wishes to be a loyal subject and servant of his king, but he cannot truly worship Rimmon. He hopes, therefore, to be excusable, if, as a loyal subject, he submits to go through the mere forms of service which his king requires, but does not allow his heart to engage in the idol-worship.

**19. Go in peace**—The prophet neither approves nor disapproves what Naaman says. He simply bids him farewell, without expressing any judgment on the sentiments he had uttered. He doubtless had wise reasons for this course of action towards him. To have sought to correct all Naaman's erroneous notions might have led Elisha too far aside from his proper work in Israel, and might also have imposed on the Syrian captain obligations which he had no power to meet, and which, under his peculiar circumstances, might as well remain unknown to him. Eli-

**20** But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. **21** So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from the chariot to meet him, and said, <sup>12</sup> *Is all well?* **22** And he said, *All is well.* <sup>13</sup> *My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.* **23** And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his

<sup>12</sup> Heb. *Is there peace?*—<sup>p</sup> 1 Kings 13. 18; Isa. 59. 3; Jer. 9. 3, 5; John 8. 44.—<sup>13</sup> Or, *secret place.*—<sup>q</sup> Acts 5. 3, 4.

sha, therefore, wisely leaving him to the spiritual guidance of the Almighty, bids him depart in peace.

#### GEHAZI'S CURSE, 20-27.

**20. Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God**—This individual has been introduced to us before, in the previous chapter, and once, at least, not to advantage, when he attempted to thrust away the weeping Shunammite from the feet of Elisha. Chap. iv, 27. The stately and solemn style in which he is here mentioned—the *servant of Elisha the man of God*—is in fearful contrast with the covetousness and falsehoods which are immediately to be told. Gehazi has well been called the Judas Iscariot of the Old Testament. **This Syrian**—These words breathe a spirit of contempt; as if a *Syrian*, a Gentile, ought to have been taxed. **As the Lord liveth**—By this solemn oath he makes his course a matter of conscience and religion. For a perverse heart, stubbornly bent on sinning, may even presume to swear its darling sin into a virtue.

**23. Naaman said... take two talents**—Worth about three thousand three hundred and twenty dollars. **Upon two of his servants**—Naaman's servants. Comp. ver. 24. The gift was a weight which one could not well carry.

servants; and they bear *them* before him. **24** And when he came to the <sup>13</sup> tower, he took *them* from their hand, and bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed. **25** But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, <sup>14</sup> Thy servant went <sup>15</sup> no whither. **26** And he said unto him, <sup>16</sup> Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it* a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants? **27** The leprosy therefore of Naaman <sup>17</sup> shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever. And he went out from his presence <sup>18</sup> a leper as *white* as snow.

<sup>14</sup> Heb. *not hither or thither.*—<sup>r</sup> Psa. 63. 11; Prov. 12. 19, 22; Acts 5. 9.—<sup>s</sup> 1 Tim. 6. 10.—<sup>t</sup> Exod. 4. 6; Num. 12. 10; chap. 13. 5.

**24. Came to the tower**—Rather, *To the hill.* הַהָר, *the hill*, here means

either the hill on which Samaria was built, or the particular eminence on which Elisha's house stood.

**26. Went not mine heart with thee**—Elisha, by Divine revelation, was enabled to see all Gehazi's actions and read the wickedness of his heart. So Peter, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. Acts v, 1-11. **Is it a time to receive money**—Shall we, by covetousness, identify ourselves with the corrupt and lying priests and prophets who bring dishonour on Jehovah's name, and on the holy office, by receiving, with avaricious grasp, money and garments and cattle and servants? However right and proper in itself it might be for priests or prophets to receive such gifts under ordinary circumstances, the times then forbade. Such gifts had in Israel become so associated with priestly covetousness and venality that it behooved the true prophet to decline them.

**27. Unto thy seed forever**—"Who can tell but that the victims of this horrid plague, now seen about the city [Samaria] and at Nablus, the present home of all the Samaritans, may be the heirs of this heritage of Gehazi?"—*Thomson.* **He went out from his presence**—And from that time forth

he seems not again to have ministered unto Elisha, though he might afterwards have been often called the servant of Elisha. See on chap. viii, 4. **A leper as white as snow**—Hence we learn that the disease of Naaman and the curse of Gehazi was the white leprosy. Comp. Exod. iv, 6; Num. xii, 10.

Let not the punishment of Gehazi be thought too severe. Important principles were involved in his conduct, for, according to verse 26, it was a time when the representatives of the sacred office needed to observe the greatest caution against the spirit of worldliness. Then, too, Gehazi's acts on this occasion were a complication of wickedness. He showed contempt for the judgment of his master in the matter of receiving gifts: he meanly misrepresented the prophet by making him ask for what Naaman had just heard him most positively refuse: he invented a false story to blind the eyes of Naaman: and finally told a miserable lie in the hope of escaping detection from Elisha. Add to all this the foul spirit of covetousness that actuated him through all this evil course, and his curse will not appear too great.

The extending of his curse to his children after him is but another exhibition of the terrible consequences of human sinfulness. Gehazi's posterity were innocent of their father's sins, but, like many others, they were compelled to bear the consequences of ancestral crimes. That thousands of innocents are subjected to suffering because of the sins of others is a fact which none can deny. Why this is permitted, under the government of an all-wise God, is a question which he has not seen fit fully to answer.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE LOST AXE HEAD RECOVERED, 1-7.

This miracle is recorded immediately after that of Naaman's cure, not because it followed it in the order of time, but because both events were associated with the Jordan, and especially because the one stands in noticeable contrast with the other. The chief point to be noticed in this miracle is not the mere

strange wonder that iron is made to swim, but that a lost instrument of labour is miraculously restored to a poor man who could ill afford to lose it. The miracle of Naaman's cure shows how the power of God relieves from sore distress one of the great and honourable ones of the world, and an idolater. It was a public display of omnipotence and grace, and served to extol the God of Israel among the nations. But lest any should suppose that Jehovah displays his power and grace only on great occasions, or for the great alone, the record of this other miracle is immediately added, teaching precisely the opposite lesson. A poor and almost unknown prophet of Jericho has a miracle wrought in his behalf in the very sphere of what might be called the most insignificant affairs of private life and toil. But with our God there are no little things. What seem to us the little cares and sorrows of the poor of this world, may have a magnitude in God's eye as great as the cares of empire and the afflictions of princes. The loss of the axe was, to the poor prophet who had borrowed it, a calamity greater than would have been to Naaman the loss of all the treasures he brought with him from Damascus.

It should also be observed, that of this class of Elisha's wonderful works this is the last one recorded, and that it makes a fitting complement to his other miracles of blessing. The healing of the waters of Jericho, the increase of the widow's oil, the raising of the Shunammite's son, the healing of the poisoned pottage, the multiplying of the loaves, and the healing of Naaman, all had more direct reference to the wants of families or societies, and did not so much enter into the particular anguish of one single heart, as did this. This relieving of a comparatively little loss, and that of a single individual, gives assurance that Divine Providence will work for the comfort of one suffering heart as well as for the interests of societies or families; and shows that sorrows which we may think of little moment, receive great attention from Him who numbers the hairs of our heads.

## CHAPTER VI.

**A**ND "the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us. **2** Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence every man a beam, and let us make a place there, where we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. **3** And one said, Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he answered, I will go. **4** So he

went with them. And when they came to Jordan, <sup>b</sup>they cut down wood. **5** But as one was felling a beam, the <sup>c</sup>axe head fell into the water: and he cried, and said, Alas, master! <sup>e</sup>for it was borrowed. **6** And the man of God said, Where fell it? And he showed him the place. And <sup>d</sup>he cut down a stick, and cast *it* in thither; and the iron did swim. **7** Therefore said he, Take *it* up to thee. And he put out his hand, and took it.

*a* Chapter 4. 38.—*b* Deuteronomy 19. 5.  
1 Heb. *iron*.

*c* Exod. 22. 14, 15; Psa. 37. 21.—*d* Chap.  
2. 21; 4. 41; Exod. 15. 25.

**1. The sons of the prophets—**The members of one of the prophetic schools, probably the one at Jericho. Compare chap. ii, 5. **The place where we dwell—**The house we occupy here at Jericho. Gilgal, which many expositors have supposed to be the place here referred to, was too far from the Jordan to meet well the conditions of this narrative, and the Gilgal where the prophets had a school was certainly not the spot where Joshua first pitched his camp after crossing the Jordan. See note on chap. ii, 1. **Too strait for us—**Too small for our accommodation. The numbers of the prophets seem to have increased, both in Judah and Israel, in proportion to the increasing wickedness of the two kingdoms. Here, too, it appears that the prophets dwelt in houses of their own; probably rude huts or booths, which their own hands had made. So in Samuel's time they had their habitations (*Naioth*) near Ramah. See note on 1 Sam. xix, 19.

**5. The axe head fell into the water—**The word rendered *axe head* is, literally, *iron*; but the connexion clearly shows that the iron axe head is meant. **Alas, master—**These words were not only an expression of sorrow, but in effect were also a petition to Elisha to recover the lost axe. **It was borrowed—**Literally, *It was asked*. The probable meaning is conveyed by the word *borrowed*, though some critics doubt whether אָשָׁא can

have this meaning. But none can well dispute that the word may here mean, *it was obtained by asking*, and that certainly may mean *borrowing*. Keil main-

tains that it had been begged for, and obtained as a present; but in that case there would not have been so much room for sorrow over its loss as this prophet felt. He appears to have been too poor to have an axe of his own, and so borrowed one for the present occasion. If the tool had been his own, no matter how he had obtained it, its loss would not have been so keenly felt by a sensitive soul; but to lose a borrowed tool, kindly lent him upon his asking for it, was a sore grief to him.

**6. He cut down a stick—**According to Vatablus, he made a new handle, and threw it in the water so dexterously that it entered the hole or socket of the iron. This, however, has a tendency to explain away the miracle, and reduce the whole affair to a mere feat of dexterity. "Would," says Keil, "that the expositors who believe this would only make the trial, in order to convince themselves, by practice, of the untenableness of their theory!" **The iron did swim—**Or, *he made the iron flow*; that is, float on the surface of the water, so that Elisha's disciple could reach forth his hand and take it. It was, therefore, a real miracle which Elisha wrought on this occasion.

Many of the older expositors find in this miracle an allegory of sin and redemption. The falling of the axe head into the water, they tell us, is typical of man's fall by sin. The new, living wood, by which it was raised, represents the wood of the cross, by which fallen humanity is raised from the depths of sin and restored to the service of God. This allegorical interpre-

8 Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place *shall be my* <sup>2</sup>camp. 9 And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down. 10 And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told

2 Or, *encamping*.—*e* 1 Sam. 28. 21; Psal. 48. 4, 5.

tation seems, however, to be too far-fetched. Better to view it in contrast with the miracle of Naaman's cure, as showing how the providence and power of God extends to the relief of the poorest and most unknown of his worshippers, as well as to the nobles of the earth.

#### THE SYRIANS SMITTEN WITH BLINDNESS, 8-23.

We come now to another class of wonders with which the ministry of Elisha was associated; not so much miracles, wrought by his agency, as marvellous answers to his prayers. In this section and the following, Elisha appears not as a worker of miracles, but as a seer, gifted with supernatural vision, and a prophet of great wisdom and prudence. His agency in these Syrian wars is substantially what it was in the war with Mesha, king of Moab. Chap. iii, 4-27. It passes from the realm of the private and personal to that of the more public and national.

8. **The king of Syria**—Ben-hadad. Compare verse 24. **Warred against Israel**—The causes and the date of this war are unknown. From verse 23 we learn that the war consisted of incursions by marauding bands, and not a regular military campaign, like the one mentioned in verse 24. The king of Syria, however, was himself engaged in this dishonourable kind of warfare. **In such and such a place shall be my camp**—That is, the Syrian king and his officers laid plans for such a disposition and movement of their forces as would deceive and circumvent the Israelites. He probably formed his camp into ambuscades, expecting to surprise and ensnare the forces which the king of Israel might send against him.

him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.

11 Therefore <sup>e</sup>the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us *is* for the king of Israel? 12 And one of his servants said, <sup>a</sup>None, my lord, O king: <sup>b</sup>but Elisha, the prophet that *is*

3 Heb. *No*.—*f* Amos 3. 7; Psal. 139. 1, 4; Eccles. 10. 20.

9. **Beware that thou pass not such a place**—That is, avoid leading or sending your forces into such a spot. This is a more natural explanation of these words than that of many interpreters, who explain them thus: Beware that thou do not overlook or fail to preoccupy and guard such a place. To pass over, in the sense of *overlooking* or *failing to notice* a place, is, to say the least, a very unusual meaning of עָבַר.

Its common signification is, *to pass through or over*, in marching from one place to another; and the loyal Elisha, with true seer-like counsel, warns his king against leading his troops over the spots where bands of the enemy are lying in ambush to surprise him. **Thither the Syrians are come down**—Into that spot the Syrian bands have already come down and put themselves in ambuscade.

10. **The king of Israel sent to the place**—Sent spies to the place, in order to ascertain if Elisha had given correct information and wise counsel. **Saved himself there**—Not by sending armed forces to rout the ambushed Syrians, or to preoccupy the place before the Syrians came down to it, but by observing the counsel of the prophet, and not passing through that locality. Again and again was he thus made acquainted with the plans and movements of his enemy, and escaped the snares set for him.

11. **Sore troubled**—Ben-hadad was vexed and chagrined to find that all his plans and movements were made known to the Israelites, and that they could thus treat all his stratagems with derision. He at once suspected that there were traitors in his own camp.

12. **One of his servants said**—How knew this servant that Elisha gave the

in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber. **13** And he said, Go and spy where he *is*, that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, *he is* in *Dothan*. **14** Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a *great* host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. **15** And when the *servant* of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? **16** And he answered, *Fear not*: for *they that be*

with us *are* more than they that *be* with them. **17** And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of *horses* and chariots of fire round about Elisha. **18** And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And *he smote them* with blindness according to the word of Elisha. **19** And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way, neither *is* this the city: *follow me*, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek.

*g* Gen. 37. 17.—*4* Heb. *heavy*.—*5* Or, *minister*.—*h* Exod. 14. 13; Psal. 27. 3; Isa. 8. 12, 13.—*i* 2 Chron. 32. 7; Psal. 55. 18; Rom. 8. 31.

*k* Chapter 2. 11; Psalm 34. 7; 68. 17; Zechariah 1. 8; 6. 1-7.—*l* Genesis 19. 11.—*6* Heb. *come ye after me*.

information? The fact was probably well known and much talked of in Israel, and from some Israelite this Syrian obtained his knowledge. **In thy bedchamber**—A proverbial expression meaning the most secret and confidential plans and counsels of the king.

**13. Go and spy where he is**—How blind, to imagine that he who could tell his secret counsels could not also frustrate the movements of his spies. **Dothan**—A beautiful spot on an eminence still bearing the name *Tell Dothan*, about twelve miles north of Samaria; the same place to which Joseph went in search of his brethren. Gen. xxxvii, 17.

**15. Servant of the man of God**—Not Gehazi, but another chosen in his place; probably a young man taken from one of the schools of the prophets.

**17. The Lord opened the eyes of the young man**—His natural eyes saw only the horses and chariots of Syria, and he could not understand Elisha's meaning when he said, *They that be with us are more than they that be with them*. He stood in blank bewilderment, terrified at sight of the enemy's host, and not knowing what to make of his master's words. In answer to Elisha's prayer God opened his spiritual eyes, unvaild his inner sense, and lifted him for a moment to the high plane of Elisha's supernatural vision, whence he obtained a view of the mighty creations of the spiritual world around him. This sight into the spiritual world was not an instance of hallucination, but a

miracle of grace; an instance of that Divine ecstasy or trance in which the holy seers were enabled to behold the visions of the supersensual world, and which consists essentially in this, that the human spirit is seized and compassed by the Divine Spirit with such force and energy that, being lifted from its natural state, it becomes altogether a seeing eye, a hearing ear, a perceiving sense, that takes most vivid cognizance of things in either heaven, earth, or hell. **The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire**—These horses and chariots were there before the young man's eyes were opened to behold them; and so we may well believe that millions of spiritual beings walk unseen around us, and perhaps minister to us in a thousand ways when we are unconscious of their presence. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him." Psalm xxxiv, 7. Compare notes on chap. ii, 11, 12.

**18. When they came down to him**—When the Syrian host came down to Elisha to capture him. **Smote them with blindness**—The same Divine power which, in answer to prayer, opened the spiritual eyes of the young man, closed and blinded even the natural eyes of the enemies of Elisha. Jehovah blesses his servants with enlarged visions of his power and glory, but curses his enemies with blindness. Compare Gen. xix, 11; Acts xiii, 11.

**19. I will bring you to the man**—There was a sort of irony in these words

But he led them to Samaria. **20** And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, <sup>m</sup>open the eyes of these *men*, that they may see. And the LORD <sup>n</sup>opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria. **21** And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite *them*? shall I smite *them*? **22** And he answered, Thou shalt not smite *them*: <sup>o</sup>wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? <sup>p</sup>set bread and water be-

<sup>m</sup> Luke 24. 31.—<sup>n</sup> Luke 16. 23.—<sup>o</sup> Deut. 20. 11, 16.—<sup>p</sup> Prov. 25. 21, 22; Rom. 12. 20.

of Elisha, which virtually treated the enemy with derision. He brought them indeed to the man they sought, but not in the place nor under the circumstances in which they would fain have found him.

**20. The Lord opened their eyes**—To them, long blinded and groping in darkness, and led through an enemy's country they knew not whither, it was a relief to see once more.

**21. Shall I smite them**—Perhaps this question was prompted by the remembrance of Ahab's great mistake in not smiting the king of Syria when he had him in his power, and for which mistake he was so sternly rebuked by one of the prophets. 1 Kings xx, 35-43.

**22. Wouldst thou smite**—That is, according to many interpreters, thou wouldst not smite those whom thou hadst made prisoners of war, much less these whom God has miraculously delivered into thy hands. But it is a fact that the law authorized the Israelites to destroy their prisoners of war, (Deut. xx, 13,) and it was often actually done, and in more than one instance they were severely blamed for neglecting to do it. Better, therefore, with the Septuagint, Chaldee, Syriac, and Vulgate versions, not to render it as a question, but thus: *That which thou hast captured with thy sword and with thy bow thou mayest smite; set bread and water before these*, etc. That is, do not treat these who have been so marvellously delivered into thy hands as ordinary prisoners of war; feast them well and send them back, and thou shalt accomplish a far greater victory. This was an antic-

fore them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. **23** And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So <sup>q</sup>the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

**24** And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged Samaria. **25** And there was <sup>r</sup>a great famine in Samaria: and, behold, *they* besieged it, until an ass's head was *sold* for fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the

<sup>q</sup> Chap. 5. 2; verses 8, 9.—<sup>r</sup> Lev. 26. 26; 1 Kings 18. 2; Jer. 14. 13, 15.

ipation of the Gospel rule, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Rom. xii, 20.

**23. The bands of Syria came no more**—Such predatory hordes of Syrian warriors were no longer allowed by the king of Syria to invade the land of Israel. The signal defeat which all his plans and movements met at the hand of Elisha struck him with a terror of the prophet and of his God. But though it ended this predatory kind of warfare, it did not prevent Ben-hadad from a subsequent invasion of Israel with all his host.

THE SIEGE OF SAMARIA AND THE GREAT FAMINE SUDDENLY ENDED, vi, 24-vii, 20.

**24. After this**—Sometime after the events recorded in the preceding section. Ben-hadad gave up the mode of warfare he had been carrying on against Israel by detached bands of warriors, and resolved to overcome the king of Israel by besieging his capital. Thus Josephus says, he "made no more secret attempts upon the king of Israel, out of fear of Elisha; but he resolved to make open war with him, thinking to overwhelm his enemies by the multitude of his army and power."

**25. A great famine in Samaria**—In consequence of the siege, which cut off all means of supply to the city. **An ass's head**—According to the law (Levit. xi, 3) the ass was an unclean animal, and therefore forbidden to be eaten at all. The head of the animal

fourth part of a cab of dove's dung for five pieces of silver. 26 And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. 27 And he said, 'If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? 28 And the king said unto her, What

7 Or, *Let not the LORD save thee.*

is, besides, the worst part of all to eat. But necessity knows no law; and how terrible must have been that famine which caused this part of an unclean animal to sell for such a fabulous price! The supposition of some, that the term *ass's head* means a certain weight or measure, is too much wanting in evidence. *An ass of bread*, in 1 Samuel xvi, 20, is quite different from *an ass's head*, and most naturally means, as the English version has it, an ass laden with bread. Surely if women ate their dead children, as verse 29 shows, we need not scruple to believe that an ass's head would sell for a great price. **Fourscore pieces of silver**—Silver shekels are probably meant, in which case this amount would be about forty-five dollars of our currency. **A cab**—A hollow vessel capable of holding about two quarts. **Dove's dung**—This is a literal translation of the Hebrew words *חִירְיוֹנִים*, *chire-yonim*.

Josephus says it was used instead of salt; others think it was used for fuel, or for quickening the growth of garden vegetables. But the context seems clearly to show that it was used for food, and hence some have, very naturally, supposed that the word denotes some vegetable food, inasmuch as the Arabs call the herb *alkali*, *sparrow's dung*. Thomson says: "I believe that the Hebrew *chir-yonim* was the name of a coarse and cheap sort of food, a kind of bean, to which this whimsical title was given on account of some fancied resemblance between the two. Nor am I at all surprised at it, for the Arabs give the most quaint, obscure, and ridiculous names to their extraordinary edible mixtures. I would therefore not translate at all, but read thus, 'A fourth part of a cab of *chir-yonim*

aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. 29 So 'we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath hid her son. 30 And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the

s Lev. 26, 29; Deut. 28, 53, 57.—8 Heb. *other*.

for five pieces of silver,' and be content with that, until we know what *chir-yonim* really is." But after all, it is still more probable that literal dove's dung is meant. Similar instances of human extremity in famine are not unknown in history. Josephus relates that in the siege of Jerusalem "some persons were driven to that terrible distress that they searched the common sewers and old dung-hills of cattle, and ate the dung which they got there." During a famine in Egypt in 1200 the poor were driven to the necessity of eating dogs, and the carcasses of animals and men, and even the excrements of both. In England in 1316, during the reign of Edward II., there was a famine in which many of the people are said to have eaten their own children, together with dogs, mice, and pigeon's dung. During the late civil war in the United States, the starving prisoners at Andersonville are said to have eaten, at times, their own excrement. Compare chap. xviii, 27. **Five pieces of silver**—About three dollars.

27. **Out of the barnfloor**—Can I gather up grain for thee from the smooth rock or cleanly swept surface of the threshingfloor, or fruit from the empty and deserted winepress? Have I power to turn stones into bread?

29. **We boiled my son**—Probably after the child had himself died from hunger. This statement is another evidence of the awful extremity and starvation to which the Samaritans were driven by this siege of Ben-hadad. This strife between these two mothers also shows how, in the bitterest hour of human misery, the lower passions will revel uncontrolled. But these were the very woes which Moses had foretold would come in case of disobedience. See Deut. xxviii, 53.

woman, that he 'rent his clothes; and he passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, *he had sackcloth within upon his flesh.* **31** Then he said, "God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day. **32** But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and the king sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, "See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine

† 1 Kings 21, 27. — *u* Ruth 1, 17; 1 Kings 19, 2.  
*v* Ezra 8, 1; 20, 1.

**30. He rent his clothes**—The king was shocked and horror-stricken at the woman's story of her grief. **Behold, ... sackcloth**—He had already put sackcloth on his flesh, but had hitherto kept this sign of humiliation concealed under his outer garment.

**31. If the head of Elisha**—In his desperation he imagines that the prophet is the cause of the nation's woe, or, at least, that he has power to remove the woe, and will not. "Jehoram," says Wordsworth, "had sackcloth on his loins, but not on his heart. He mourned for the famine, but not for its cause, namely, his own sins and the sins of the people; and instead of being penitent towards God, he is furious against God's prophet."

**32. Sat in his house**—His own house in Samaria, where he was dwelling when Naaman sought his help. Chap. v, 9. **The elders sat with him**—They were probably consulting together on the state of the city, and were providentially present to witness the scene that is here recorded. **This son of a murderer**—Son of Jezebel, who murdered the prophets of the Lord, (1 Kings xviii, 4,) and of Ahab, who by his silence and submission to her will sanctioned her wickedness. More directly still was Ahab the murderer of Naboth. 1 Kings xxi, 19. So now Jehoram was in heart the murderer, when he sent this messenger to behead Elisha. **His master's feet behind him**—This verse and the following are obscure from their brevity. They seem to be an abridgment of a fuller narrative. It seems that immediately after the king had despatched

head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: *is* not the sound of his master's feet behind him? **33** And while he yet talked with them, behold, the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is* of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?

## CHAPTER VII.

**T**HEN Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the Lord; Thus saith the Lord,

*w* Luke 13, 32. — *x* 1 Kings 18, 4.  
*y* Job 2, 9.

the messenger to behead Elisha he repented of his rash action, and hastened, in company with one of his officers, to countermand his order and prevent its execution.

**33. While he yet talked with them**—While Elisha was yet in the act of telling the elders to fasten the door and keep the messenger out. **And he said**—Who said? It seems at first difficult to determine whether the words that follow are the words of the prophet, the messenger, or the king. But on closer study they seem best to suit the mouth of the king, and the obscurity of the passage must be attributed to the brevity of the narrative. **This evil is of the Lord**—These words of the king are a part of his countermand of the order to behead Elisha, and a reason for it. He is convinced that the famine is a Divine judgment on the nation for his sins. **What should I wait for the Lord**—Rather, *Why should I wait, etc.* These words are virtually a prayer for the Lord to come and remove the famine. The passage may be thus paraphrased: I acknowledge that this evil is a punishment for my sins; the Lord thus chastens me sorely. But now, when all this people are brought to such an extremity of woe, why should I wait longer for the Lord to interpose and deliver his people from their sufferings?

## CHAPTER VII.

Here is a very unhappy and unnatural separation of chapters, interrupting the narrative at a most interesting point.

**1. Hear ye the word of the Lord**—The king had waited for the Lord, and

To morrow about this time *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. **2** <sup>b</sup>Then <sup>a</sup>a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, <sup>c</sup>if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. **3** And there were four leprous men <sup>d</sup>at the eating in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? **4** If we say, <sup>e</sup>We will enter into the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, <sup>f</sup>we shall but die. **5** And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of

<sup>a</sup> Verses 18, 19. — <sup>b</sup> Verses 17-20. — <sup>1</sup> Heb. *a lord which belonged to the king leaning upon his hand*, chap. 5. 18. — <sup>c</sup> Mal. 3. 10. — <sup>d</sup> Lev.

the Lord now answers by his prophet. The Lord announces that he shall not wait longer than the morrow. **A measure**—A *seah*; a vessel containing about two gallons and a half, or a little more than a peck. **For a shekel**—About fifty-seven cents. A great change this from paying forty-five dollars for an ass's head, or three dollars for a pint of dove's dung.

**2. A lord on whose hand the king leaned**—Rather, *the lord*. נָשִׂיא,

*third man*, was the name of one of the highest officers of state, and one of the nearest attendants upon his person. He was to the king of Israel what Naaman was to the king of Syria—prime minister. See chap. v. 18. **If the Lord**—Literally, *Behold, Jehovah making windows in heaven! Can this thing be?* It is the language of scornful unbelief. The prime minister looks upon the thing foretold as a sheer impossibility, and treats the prophet's words with contemptuous scorn. Only think, he says, of Jehovah opening the heavens and showering down meal and grain! Can such a thing be? **Thou shalt see . . . but shalt not eat**—How this came to pass is told in verses 17-20. Such scornful unbelief deserved a signal punishment.

the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, *there was* no man there. **6** For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians <sup>g</sup>to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, *even* the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us <sup>h</sup>the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. **7** Wherefore they <sup>i</sup>arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, *even* the camp as it *was*, and fled for their life. **8** And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid *it*; and came again, and entered into another tent, and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*. **9** Then they said one

13. 46. — <sup>e</sup> Jer. 14. 18. — <sup>f</sup> 2 Sam. 14. 14; Heb. 9. 27. — <sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. 5. 24; chap. 19. 7; Job 15. 21. — <sup>h</sup> 1 Kings 10. 29. — <sup>i</sup> Psal. 48. 4-6; Prov. 23. 1

## 6. To hear a noise of chariots—

This may have been the noise of the same host whose movements David was once permitted to hear in the tops of the trees, and which led him on to the conquest of the Philistines. 2 Sam. v. 24. Or the noise may have had no objective reality, but may have been a mere delusion produced in the minds of the Syrians. In either case it was caused by the Lord, and the Syrians were led to imagine that Jehoram had hired against them the armies of other nations. **Kings of the Hittites**—After the Israelitish conquest of Palestine, the Hittites seem to have retired into Syria. "They are found," says Rawlinson, "among the Syrian enemies of the Egyptians, in the monuments of the nineteenth dynasty, and appear at that time to have inhabited the valley of the upper Orontes. In the early Assyrian monuments they appear as the most powerful people of northern Syria, and were especially strong in chariots." **Kings of the Egyptians**—But, so far as we know, Egypt was always governed by a single ruler, and not, as the Canaanite races, by a number of petty kings. We need not assume, however, that these terrified Syrians used accurate language on this occasion.

to another, We do not well: \* this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, <sup>2</sup> some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household. **10** So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*. **11** And he called the porters; and they told *it* to the king's house within. **12** And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *be* hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city. **13** And one of his servants answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left <sup>3</sup> in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, <sup>1</sup> they *are* even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed,) and let us send and see. **14** They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. **15** And they went

<sup>k</sup> Isa. 41. 27; 52. 7; Nah. 1. 15; Luke 2. 10.—  
<sup>2</sup> Heb. *we shall find punishment*.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *in it*.—<sup>l</sup> Jer. 14. 18.—<sup>m</sup> Job 2. 4; Isa. 2. 20, 21; 31. 7; Matt. 24. 16, 18.

**13. They are as all the multitude**—Or, *they will be as all the multitude*—That is, all of us in this city are about to perish with famine, and they who go forth to spy the camp of the enemy can fare no worse than we. In the word that may befall them they will not be likely to suffer more than the rest of us who remain. This reasoning was like that of the lepers in verse 4. **Behold, I say**—This repetition is wanting in the Septuagint and Syriac versions, and in several Hebrew MSS, and some have thought it spurious, and to be omitted. But it seems to have been purposely inserted to intensify the thought of the deplorable and perishing condition of the inhabitants of Samaria.

**14. Two chariot horses**—Literally, *two chariot of horses*; that is, two span of horses; horses enough to accom-

after them unto Jordan: and, lo, all the way *was* full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had <sup>m</sup> cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the king. **16** And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, <sup>n</sup> according to the word of the Lord. **17** And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died, <sup>o</sup> as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him. **18** And it came to pass as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, <sup>p</sup> Two measures of barley for a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall be to morrow about this time in the gate of Samaria: **19** And that lord answered the man of God, and said, Now, behold, <sup>q</sup> if the Lord should make windows in heaven, might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. **20** And <sup>r</sup> so it fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the gate, and he died.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

**T**HEN spake Elisha unto the woman, <sup>s</sup> whose son he had restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine

<sup>n</sup> Ver. 1.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 6. 32; ver. 2.—<sup>p</sup> Ver. 1.—<sup>q</sup> Numbers 20. 12; Deuteronomy 34. 4, 5; Job 20. 23; Jeremiah 17. 5, 6; Hebrews 3. 18, 19.—<sup>r</sup> a Chap. 4. 35.

pany two chariots. Instead of five, as the servants proposed, the king sent four.

**17. Trode upon him in the gate**—He was overrun and trodden down in the rush and furor of the famished populace as they went forth to gather up the spoils of the enemy's camp. Thus all the predictions of Elisha were literally and signally fulfilled.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN AGAIN, 1-6.

**1. The woman, whose son he had restored**—The wealthy woman of Shunem. See chap. iv, 8-27. This narrative shows other ways, besides the ones already recorded, in which Elisha proved a blessing to this woman. He advises her to go and sojourn in a foreign land during the coming famine,

household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the Lord<sup>b</sup> hath called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years. **2** And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines seven years. **3** And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house and for her land. **4** And the king talked with<sup>c</sup> Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray

<sup>b</sup> Psa. 105. 16; Hag. 1. 11.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 5. 27.  
<sup>d</sup> Chap. 4. 35.

and after her return the influence of his former miracles for her is instrumental in the recovery of her lost possessions. **The Lord hath called for a famine**—"Famines do not come by chance, but they are messengers whom the Lord calls, and whom he sends to call his people to repentance."—*Wordsworth*. **Seven years**—A famine terrible by reason of its long continuance; just twice the duration of the drought foretold by Elijah in the days of Ahab. 1 Kings xvii, 1. Compare Luke iv, 25. This famine was quite probably identical with the *dearth* mentioned chap. iv, 38.

**3. To cry unto the king for her house**—During her long absence others had taken possession of her house and land, but whether it had been seized by public authority or otherwise does not appear. See Thomson's note below. From verse 5 we learn that this woman's son, whom Elisha had restored to life, accompanied her on this occasion.

**4. The king talked with Gehazi**—Many of the best expositors suppose this conversation took place before Gehazi became leprous, and therefore before the cleansing of Naaman. This is very probable, for it is not likely that the king would talk much with a leper, and we have already observed that the chronology of Jehoram's reign is uncertain and obscure. See note at the beginning of chap. iii. But it must not be denied that this talk with Gehazi might have occurred after the latter became leprous. Though a lep-

er, all the great things that Elisha hath done. **5** And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had<sup>e</sup> restored a dead body to life, that, behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son, whom Elisha restored to life. **6** And when the king asked the woman, she told him. So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that *was* hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

<sup>e</sup> Proverbs 18. 9; Matthew 10. 29.  
1 Or, *eunuch*.

er, and no longer in the service of his old master, he might still have been known and spoken of as *the servant of the man of God*, and the king's insatiable curiosity to learn the private history of Elisha might have led him to hold a conversation with a leper. The supposition of some divines, that Gehazi repented and had his curse of leprosy revoked, is an unfounded conjecture, destitute of the least shadow of support in Scripture, and in direct opposition to Elisha's solemn sentence, "The leprosy shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed forever." Chap. v, 27.

**6. Restore all that was hers**—Her estate was of no small value, for, according to chapter iv, 8, she was a *great*, that is, a wealthy and influential person at Sionem. **All the fruits of the field**—All the produce that her land had yielded for the seven years, whether it were more or less. She was thus reimbursed according to the yield of the land.

On the above narrative Dr. Thomson has the following: "It is still common for even petty sheiks to confiscate the property of any person who is exiled for a time, or who moves away temporarily from his district. Especially is this true of widows and orphans, and the Shanammite was now a widow. And small is the chance to such of having their property restored, unless they can secure the mediation of some one more influential than themselves. The conversation between the king and Gehazi about his master is also in perfect keeping with the habits

7 And Elisha came to Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of God is come hither. 8 And the king said unto 'Hazael, 'Take a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God, and <sup>h</sup>inquire of the Lord by him, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? 9 So Hazael went to meet him, and

took a present <sup>a</sup>with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? 10 And Elisha said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the Lord hath showed me that <sup>i</sup>he

f 1 Kings 19. 15.—g 1 Sam. 9. 7; 1 Kings 14. 3; chap. 5. 5.

h Chap. 1. 2.—2 Hebrew, *in his hand*.  
i Verse 15.

of Eastern princes; and the appearance of the widow and her son so opportunely, would have precisely the same effect now that it had then. The thing happened just as recorded. It is too natural to be an invention or fabrication."

HAZAEI MADE KING OF SYRIA, 7-15.

7. **Elisha came to Damascus**—To fulfil the word of the Lord spoken long before to Elijah. See 1 Kings xix, 15, and note there.

8. **Inquire of the Lord by him**—It is noticeable that this heathen king sends in his sickness to inquire, not of his own gods, but of the prophet of Jehovah. This was doubtless owing to his knowledge of what Elisha had done for Naaman, the captain of his host. In the days of his health and prosperity he had not heeded the lesson of Naaman's cure, but in the hour of sickness he consults the same wonderful physician.

9. **Forty camels' burden**—"There is often in these countries," observes Harmer, "a great deal of pomp and parade in presenting gifts, and that not only when they are presented to princes, or governors of provinces, but where they are of a more private nature. 'Through ostentation,' says one writer, 'they never fail to load upon four or five horses what might easily be carried by one.' In like manner as to jewels, trinkets, and other things of value, they place in fifteen dishes what a single plate would very well hold." Accordingly, we must not understand that this present for Elisha, though doubtless very large and valuable, and worthy of the king, was so great that it required forty camels to carry it, but must understand it in the light of this

Oriental custom of making on such occasions as great a display as possible. **Shall I recover**—Literally, *Shall I live?*

10. **Thou mayest certainly recover**—The Hebrew text, in accordance with a majority of Hebrew MSS., reads thus: *Go, say, thou certainly shalt not live; or more literally, living thou shalt not live.* Instead of <sup>h</sup>to him, the Keri has <sup>i</sup>to him, and this reading our English translators, as well as the Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, and Chaldee versions, have followed. The external evidence would seem to favour this latter reading, but the internal is certainly against it. In the very next sentence Elisha says, *The Lord has shown me that he shall certainly die.* The *howbeit* of the English version is in the Hebrew simply the copulative <sup>j</sup>, and.

The translation, *thou mayest certainly recover*, (that is, as some explain, it is possible for thee to recover from thy sickness, this disease shall not cause thy death,) is only a lame effort to escape the obvious inconsistency and contradiction that exists in the reading adopted by most of the versions. How unnatural and inexplicable that Elisha should order Hazael to go, and, in a matter of so solemn moment as death, deceive his king by uttering a positive falsehood! It is much more natural to suppose that Hazael, informed that he is destined to be king, went and deceived Ben-hadad by misconstruing Elisha's words. See on verse 14. We therefore adopt the reading of the Hebrew text, and translate Elisha's words thus: *Go, say, Thou surely shalt not live. And Jehovah has shown me that he shall surely die.* These words were doubtless uttered

shall surely die. **11** And he settled his countenance <sup>s</sup>steadfastly, until he was ashamed: and the man of God <sup>k</sup>wept. **12** And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know <sup>l</sup>the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and <sup>n</sup>wilt dash their children, and rip up

§ Heb. *an* <sup>3</sup> *er* <sup>5</sup> *it*. — *k* Luke 19. 41. — *l* Chap. 10. 32; 12. 17; 13. 3, 7; Amos 1. 3.

with much emotion, and this fact sufficiently explains the change from the second to the third person in the two sentences, and the insertion of the copulative *and*.

**11. He settled his countenance steadfastly** — Literally, *He made his countenance stand, and fixed it*. That is, Elisha composed himself and fastened upon Hazael a deep, steadfast, searching gaze that seemed to read him through and through. **Until he was ashamed** — Until Hazael was ashamed. The prophet continued that steadfast, searching gaze, until Hazael blushed with embarrassment, not knowing what to say. **Man of God wept** — Here was another manifestation of Elisha's emotion, greater even than that with which he had answered the question of Hazael.

**12. I know the evil that thou wilt do** — All that long and steadfast gaze had been a fathoming of Hazael's heart, and a kenning of his future life and destiny. It had already been foretold in the word of the Lord to Elijah, 1 Kings xix, 17. The burning of Israelitish fortresses, and the other cruelties here named, which Hazael would perpetrate, all doubtless came to pass in the wars which this usurper carried on with Israel. See verses 28, 29; chap. x, 32, 33; chap. xii, 17, 18; chap. xiii, 3-7, 22; and 2 Chron. xxiv, 23, 24. Hazael reigned more than forty years, and seems generally to have had the advantage over the Israelites, and greatly oppressed them.

**13. But what, is thy servant a dog** — There are two explanations of this verse. One makes it the language of horror; the other, that of delight and exulting surprise. The former is the

their women with child. **13** And Hazael said, But what, <sup>n</sup>is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, <sup>o</sup>the Lord hath showed me that thou *shalt be king over Syria*. **14** So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He told me *that thou shouldst surely recover*. **15** And it came to pass

*m* Chap. 15. 16; Hosea 13. 16; Amos 1. 13.  
*n* 1 Sam. 17. 43. — *o* 1 Kings 19. 15.

one conveyed by the English version, and most generally adopted. Hazael expresses his horror and indignation at the thought that he should be such a mean dog as to perpetrate such wickedness as Elisha specified. And yet, according to this view, this showing of horror, and pretending to loathe such deeds of crime, might have been feigned and hypocritical. The other interpretation, less natural, supposes that if Hazael was horrified at the thought of such wickedness, he would not call it a *great thing*, and urges that a *dog* is an epithet of contempt, not of cruelty. Assuming that Hazael was delighted with the prospect of a crown, it makes him say, *What is thy servant, the dog, that he should do this great thing!* We prefer the former view, which makes Hazael repudiate the very thought of doing such base deeds. He would be at such a moment as likely to apply to himself a term of contempt as one of cruelty, and it must not be overlooked that Elisha had not yet informed him he would be king of Syria. **Thou shalt be king over Syria** — Until the prophet uttered these words Hazael did not know his destiny, and therefore did not understand how he could perpetrate such deeds as Elisha mentioned. This thought excludes the view that Hazael's words above were an exclamation of delighted surprise at the unexpected prospect of the throne. The command to Elijah—a command now binding on Elisha—was to *anoint Hazael king over Syria*, (1 Kings xix, 15,) and this anointing was probably done by Elisha on this occasion, though the fact is not recorded.

**14. He told me . . . thou shouldst surely recover** — This, as we have

on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

**16** And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, <sup>1</sup>Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah <sup>2</sup>began to reign. **17** Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

<sup>p</sup> 2 Chron. 21. 3, 4. — <sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *reigned*. — <sup>q</sup> 2 Chron. 21. 5, &c. — <sup>r</sup> Verse 26. — <sup>s</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 13; 1 Kings 11. 36; 15. 4; 2 Chron. 21. 7.

seen above, is the exact opposite of what Elisha said, made so by the omission of the single word **not**. Hazael thus deceived Ben-hadad, expecting, probably, to put him off his guard. He who had murder in his heart, and whom Elisha's words had inspired to a boundless ambition, was none too good to lie.

**15. He took**—Hazael, not, as some have thought, Ben-hadad, applied the cloth. **A thick cloth**—Probably a bedquilt, with which he suffocated the king; and this method of assassination would leave no marks of violence upon the dead. Thus Kitto: "The coverlets used in the East, where blankets are unknown, being thickly quilted with wool or cotton, become of great weight when soaked in water; and it thus became the fittest instrument for such a purpose that could be found about an Eastern bed; while the use of wet bedclothes in fever would prevent any suspicion arising from the coverlet being found saturated with moisture. It is an Eastern practice, in some kinds of fever, to wet the bedding, and it is in such cases often done with good effect; while in other kinds of fever such an application would be dangerous, if not fatal." **Hazael reigned in his stead**—Ben-hadad perhaps died childless, and so Hazael's accession to his throne may have been the more easily and quietly brought about.

REIGN OF JEHORAM, SON OF JEHOSEPHAT, 16-24.

**16. Joram . . . Jehoram**—These names are used interchangeably, the one being merely a contraction of the

**18** And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab; for the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the sight of the Lord. **19** Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give him always a light, and to his children. **20** In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king over themselves.

<sup>5</sup> Hebrew, *candle, or, lamp*. — <sup>1</sup> Genesis 27. 40; chapter 3. 27; 2 Chronicles 21. 8-10. — <sup>u</sup> 1 Kings 22. 47.

other. Ahab and Jehoshaphat had each a son Jehoram, and these sons became brothers-in-law by the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son with Ahab's daughter. Verse 18. See the note on 1 Kings xxii, 42; and on the chronology of this reign the note on chap. i, 17. **Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah**—This confirms the supposition made in note on chap. i, 17, that Jehoram began to reign during his father's lifetime. Some MSS. and versions omit these words; but the weight of evidence is in favour of retaining them. This Jehoram's reign is more fully described in 2 Chron. xxi.

**18. For**—Introducing the reason or special cause why Jehoram walked in the way of the kings of Israel. **The daughter of Ahab was his wife**—Her name was Athaliah. Compare verse 26. This marriage was probably arranged and brought about by the parents of the parties, but it was the source of untold woes to the kingdom of Judah. It was the cause of Jehoram's walking in the ways of the kings of Israel, just as Ahab's marriage with Jezebel was instrumental in introducing Phœnician idolatry into the northern kingdom. A comparison of ages given in verses 17 and 26 shows that this marriage was consummated at an early age, for Joram's youngest son, Ahaziah, was born when he was only eighteen years old, and he had other sons. See 2 Chron. xxi, 17.

**20. Edom revolted**—This was a determined and successful effort on the part of the Edomites to break away from the thralldom which had oppressed them ever since the days of David. See note on 1 Kings xxii, 47.

**21** So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of the chariots: and the people fled into their tents. **22** Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day. <sup>v</sup> Then Libnah revolted at the same time. **23** And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chron-

icles of the kings of Judah? **24** And Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and <sup>w</sup> **Ahaziah** his son reigned in his stead.

**25** In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign. **26** <sup>x</sup> Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem.

<sup>v</sup> 2 Chronicles 21. 10.—<sup>w</sup> 2 Chronicles 22. 1.—<sup>x</sup> *Azariah*, 2 Chronicles 22. 6, and *Jehoahaz*, 2 Chronicles 21. 17; 25. 23.—<sup>x</sup> See 2 Chronicles 22. 2.

**21. Zair**—This some have thought identical with *Zoar*, others a corruption of *Seir*, and others an erroneous reading of שָׂרִי, *his princes*, which is found in the parallel passage. 2 Chron. xxi. 9. But these are all conjectures. It was doubtless the name of a place in the borders of Edom, which is now unknown. **Smote the Edomites which compassed him about**—He was victorious in this particular night engagement, but he failed to subdue the rebellion or subjugate the country. **And the captains of the chariots**—The captains of the enemies' chariots; from which it appears that on this occasion the Edomites, as well as the Hebrews, fought with chariots. **The people fled into their tents**—That is, the Jewish people, the warriors of Joram. The whole passage is obscure from its brevity, but the general meaning is: Joram went with a great host, particularly strong in war-chariots, to subdue the revolt of the Edomites. Having arrived in their country, he is suddenly surrounded by the enemy, and makes a night attack upon them; smites many of them, especially the captains of their chariots, and succeeds in breaking through their ranks, when his whole army give over the battle and run away to their homes. The Edomites thus threw off the yoke of Judah, and fulfilled the ancient prophecy of Isaac. Gen. xxvii. 40.

**22. Edom revolted... unto this day**—Some sixty years later the Edomites were again subdued by Amaziah king of Judah, (chap. xiv. 7,) so that this record would seem to have been made before the reign of Amaziah. Or it may be, that the subjection of Edom

to Amaziah and to his successor Azariah (chap. xiv. 21, 22) was regarded as so temporary and partial as not to amount to a real crushing out of the revolt under Jehoram, for soon after, in the days of Ahaz, the Edonites made inroads upon Judah, (2 Chron. xxviii. 17,) and when the Chaldeans overthrew the Jewish state, and carried the Jews into captivity, the Edomites assisted in the conquest. Obad. 11. **Libnah**—A city in the southwestern part of the Holy Land, whose inhabitants Joshua once utterly destroyed. See Josh. x. 29, 30. Its site is now unknown. The slight notice of this revolt of Libnah indicates that it was of comparatively little importance, but its success shows the weakness of Jehoram's reign.

**24. Joram slept with his fathers**—He died of a horrible disease, and was buried unwept and unhonoured. Compare the account in 2 Chron. xxi.

HAZIAH'S REIGN, 25-29.

**25. Ahaziah the son of Jehoram**—His youngest son, called also *Jehoahaz* (2 Chron. xxi. 27) and *Azariah*, (xxii. 6.) All the older sons of Jehoram were carried off by the Philistines and Arabians.

**26. Two and twenty years old**—Not *forty and two*, as 2 Chron. xxii. 2, by some corruption, reads. His father died in his fortieth year, (verse 17,) so that he must have begotten his youngest son when he was eighteen years old. This fact shows the early marriage of Joram and Athaliah. Compare note on verse 18. **Reigned one year**—His reign and life were brought to an untimely end by his being involved

And his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the <sup>7</sup>daughter of Omri king of Israel. **27** <sup>7</sup>And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, as *did* the house of Ahab: for he *was* the son in law of the house of Ahab. **28** And he went <sup>2</sup>with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. **29** And <sup>a</sup>king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds <sup>8</sup>which the Syrians had given him at <sup>9</sup>Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria.

<sup>7</sup> Or, *granddaughter*; verse 18.—<sup>v</sup> 2 Chron. 22. 3, 4.—<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. 22. 5.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 9. 15.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *wherewith the Syrians had wounded*.

with the house of Ahab. See chap. ix, 16, 23, 27–29. **The daughter of Omri**—She was the granddaughter of Omri, as is seen from verse 18; but the word “daughter” is often thus used in the more general sense of *female descendant*. Gen. xxviii, 8; Judges xi, 40; 2 Sam. i, 20. The name of Omri seems to be mentioned rather than that of Ahab to remind the reader once more of the origin of this wicked dynasty, which is soon to be cut off.

**27. He walked in the way of the house of Ahab**—“For,” says 2 Chron. xxii, 3, “his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly.” The same wicked woman led both his father and himself into ruin. **He was the son in law of the house of Ahab**—He, like his father, had married a wife of the daughters of Omri, so that he “was connected with the house of Ahab by a double tie—of mother and wife.”—*Wordsworth*.

**28. Went with Joram**—His uncle. **To the war against Hazael**—Here already we meet with that Hazael who treated with such contempt and apparent abhorrence the thought that he should commit sore evils against Israel, (verse 13,) engaged in war with that people. This battle was at **Ramoth-gilead**, the old spot so much contested between the kings of Israel and Syria. 1 Kings xxii, 3. At this time it was retaken from the Syrians by Joram's forces, and held in spite of all Hazael's efforts to recover it. Chap. ix, 14. **The Syrians wounded Joram**—While besieging Ramoth-gilead, according to

<sup>\*</sup> And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was <sup>10</sup>sick.

## CHAPTER IX.

**AND** Elisha the prophet called one of <sup>a</sup>the children of the prophets, and said unto him, <sup>b</sup>Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, <sup>c</sup>and go to Ramoth-gilead: **2** And when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him arise up from

<sup>9</sup> *Ramoth*, verse 28.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 9. 16; 2 Chron. 22. 6, 7.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *wounded*.—<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 20. 35.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 4. 23; Jer. i. 17.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 8. 28, 29.

Josephus, he was struck by an arrow from one of the Syrian archers.

**29. Joram went back to be healed**—Not, however, until after he had taken possession of Ramoth, which he left in charge of Jehu. **Ramah**—The same with Ramoth-gilead. **Ahaziah . . . went down to see Joram . . . in Jezreel**—He was led there by a punitive arrangement of Divine Providence to meet his doom. Compare chap. ix, 27, and 2 Chron. xxii, 7.

## CHAPTER IX.

**JEHU ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL, 1–13.**

We come now to trace the fearful doom of Omri's dynasty. First the chosen avenger is anointed king and proclaimed such in the army, (1–14.) Then follow, in rapid succession, the deaths of Joram (15–26) and of Ahaziah, (27–29,) and of Jezebel, (30–37;) the slaughter of Ahab's seventy sons, (chap. x, 1–11,) and of the brethren of Ahaziah, (12–14,) and of the priests and worshippers of Baal, (18–28.) Then follows (in chap. xi) the tragic tale of Athaliah's fall.

**1. Called one of the children of the prophets**—Elisha was now, perhaps, too old and infirm to go himself to Ramoth-gilead, or else he deemed it better for some reason to send another in his place. **Gird up thy loins**—So as to be expeditious in thy mission. **This box of oil**—Or, *flask of oil*. See on 1 Sam. x, 1.

**2. Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat**—Not, of course, of *king* Jehoshaphat, but of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi.

among <sup>d</sup>his brethren, and carry him to an <sup>e</sup>inner chamber; **3** Then <sup>f</sup>take the box of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not. **4** So the young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead. **5** And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us? And he said, To thee, O captain. **6** And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, *even* over Israel. **7** And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, <sup>g</sup>at the hand of Jezebel. **8** For the

<sup>d</sup> Verses 5, 11.—1 Heb. *chamber in a chamber*.—<sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 19. 16.—<sup>f</sup> 1 Kings 19. 16; 2 Chron. 22. 7.—<sup>g</sup> 1 Kings 18. 4; 21. 15.—<sup>h</sup> 1 Kings 14. 10; 21. 21.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Sam. 25. 22.

This Jehu had been with Ahab, and had heard, and laid up in his heart, the fearful prediction of Elijah against that monarch when he went to take possession of Naboth's vineyard. 1 Kings xxi, 18–29. Compare verse 25. But already had he been made known to Elijah as the future king of Israel, and that prophet had been commissioned to anoint him; (1 Kings xix, 16;) but the commission was, in the providence of God, transferred to Elisha, who now fulfils it by the hand of one of his disciples. **His brethren**—His brethren in arms; his fellow-soldiers at Ramoth-gilead. **Carry him**—Literally, *cause him to come in*; that is, lead or conduct him. **Inner chamber**—This significant act is to be done in secret. In like manner Saul and David were first privately anointed.

**6. Thus saith the Lord**—Compare the following words of this prophet with the words of Ahijah in 1 Kings xiv, 10, 11, and of Elijah, 1 Kings xxi, 21–24, and the notes on those passages.

**11. His lord**—King Joram. **This mad fellow**—מְשֻׁעַ, pual part. of שָׁעַ; *one who raves*, or is frenzied and furious. This was spoken contemptuously of the prophet, though doubtless his

whole house of Ahab shall perish: and <sup>h</sup>I will cut off from Ahab <sup>i</sup>him that pisseth against the wall, and <sup>k</sup>him that is shut up and left in Israel: **9** And I will make the house of Ahab like the house of <sup>l</sup>Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of <sup>m</sup>Baasha the son of Ahijah: **10** And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and *there shall be none to bury her*. And he opened the door, and fled. **11** Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and *one* said unto him, *Is all well?* wherefore came <sup>n</sup>this mad fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man, and his communication. **12** And they said, *It is false*: tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. **13** Then they hastened, and <sup>o</sup>took every man his garment, and put <sup>p</sup>it under him on the top of the stairs,

<sup>k</sup> Deut. 32. 36.—<sup>l</sup> 1 Kings 14. 10; 15. 29; 21. 23.—<sup>m</sup> 1 Kings 16. 3, 11.—<sup>n</sup> 1 Kings 21. 23; verses 35, 36.—<sup>o</sup> Jer. 29. 26; John 10. 20; Acts 26. 24; 1 Cor. 4. 10.—<sup>p</sup> Matt. 21. 7.

hurried manner, his emotional bearing, and sudden departure and flight, gave occasion for the term *mad* or *crazy*. **Ye know the man, and his communication**—That is, ye know him to be mad, and his discourse is according to his wild character. Jehu wished at first to keep the matter to himself, and so avoided answering their question.

**12. False; tell us now**—Though they had contemptuously called him a madman, their better nature told them that this was false, and now, as they notice Jehu's disposition to evade their question, they insist on knowing the prophet's mission. **Thus and thus spake he to me**—He at once decides to tell them just that part of the prophet's discourse and action which referred to his being made king, thinking, possibly, that they might consider that declaration further evidence of his being crazy. Of his commission to destroy the house of Ahab he said nothing.

**13. Took every man his garment**—This spreading of garments down for sovereigns to tread upon was and is a common custom in the East. Compare Matt. xxi, 7. It was a public expression of subjection and homage. **On the top of the stairs**—Literally, *On the bone of the steps*, that is, on the very

and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.

**14** So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria: **15** But a king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu

2 Heb. *reigneth*.—q Chap. 8, 29.—3 Heb. *Jehoram*.—4 Heb. *smote*.

said, If it be your minds, *then* let none go forth nor escape out of the city to go to tell it in Jezreel. **16** So Jehu rode in a chariot, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram. **17** And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take a horseman, and send to meet them, and

5 Heb. *let no escaper go*, &c.—r Chap. 8, 29. s 2 Sam. 13, 54; Isa. 21, 6.

steps, or stairway, leading up to the house wherein these warriors were assembled. In their haste to proclaim Jehu king, they did not stop to go and erect a suitable platform and a throne, but used for this purpose the very steps of the house where they were sitting. "The stairs doubtless ran round the inside of the quadrangle of the house, as they do now, for instance, in the ruin called the house of Zaccheus at Jericho, and Jehu sat where they joined the flat platform which formed the top or roof of the house. Thus he was conspicuous against the sky, while the captains were below him in the quadrangle."—*Stanley*. **Blew with trumpets**—A common custom when a new king was proclaimed. Compare 1 Kings i, 39, 40. **Jehu is king**—"Their readiness in throwing off their allegiance to Jehoram is something remarkable. But it was known that the house of Ahab was in this generation doomed to destruction. This was a thing people were not likely to forget. It was known that Elisha, who had sent this man, was a commissioned prophet, authorized to declare the will of the Lord. And it is probable that the military were dissatisfied with the rule of a house so completely under the influence of one bad woman, and the errors and crimes of which had, first and last, brought so much discredit upon the nation. Add to this, that in the absence of a fixed succession to a throne which so many successful adventurers had already won, loyalty sits but lightly upon the soldiery; and they are very prone to vote a popular commander into the throne when it becomes vacant, or even to make it vacant for him."—*Kitto*.

DEATH OF JEHOAM, 14-26.

**14. Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead**—Rather, *was keeping watch in Ramoth-gilead*. He had forcibly taken it out of the hands of the Syrians, and now had all the army there to guard it lest it should be retaken by Hazael. The king himself, as we have already seen, (chap. viii, 28,) had been wounded during the siege by the Syrian archers, but after having taken it, he left it in charge of the army under command of Jehu, and returned to Jezreel to be healed of his wounds.

**15. Let none go forth**—Here we observe Jehu's prompt and decisive action which had so much to do with his success. He would take Joram by surprise, and be himself the first messenger to announce his fall.

**17. A watchman on the tower**—"There was usually in ancient times a watchtower over the royal residence, where a man was always stationed, night and day, to keep a good look out in all directions, but especially in that direction from which any sort of tidings could be expected. What he beheld, which he deemed of any consequence, he declared below in the courts of the palace. In the present case the frequency of reports from the seat of war, and the king's anxiety for intelligence, naturally kept the attention of the watchman much in that direction."—*Kitto*. Dr. Robinson, describing the modern village of Jezreel, mentions "a square tower of some height, partly in ruins, from the several windows of which we enjoyed a splendid view of the adjacent country in all directions." **I see a company**—A vast multitude. Jehu had not come alone;

let him say, *Is it peace?* **18** So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?* And Jehu said, 'What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came to them, but he cometh not again. **19** Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus saith the king, *Is it peace?* And Jehu answered, What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. **20** And the watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and cometh not again: and the <sup>6</sup>driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth <sup>7</sup>furiously. **21** And Joram said, <sup>8</sup>Make ready. And his chariot was made ready. And <sup>9</sup>Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu, and <sup>9</sup>met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. **22** And it came to pass, when Joram

saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it peace, Jehu?* And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts *are so many?* **23** And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said to Ahaziah, *There is treachery, O Ahaziah.* **24** And Jehu <sup>10</sup>drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he <sup>11</sup>sunk down in his chariot. **25** Then said *Jehu* to Bidkar his captain, Take up, and cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, <sup>12</sup>the Lord laid this burden upon him; **26** Surely I have seen yesterday the <sup>12</sup>blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the Lord; and <sup>13</sup>"I will requite thee in this <sup>13</sup>plat, saith the Lord. Now therefore take and cast him into the plat of *ground*, according to the word of the Lord.

<sup>t</sup> Isa. 48. 22; 59. 8; Jer. 16. 5; Rom. 3. 17.—  
<sup>6</sup> Or, *marching*.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *in madness*.—  
<sup>8</sup> Heb. *Bind*.—<sup>9</sup> 2 Chron. 22. 7.—<sup>9</sup> Heb.

*found*.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *filled his hand with a bow*.—  
—<sup>11</sup> Heb. *boved*.—<sup>11</sup> 1 Kin. 21. 29.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *bloods*.—<sup>13</sup> 1 Kings 21. 19.—<sup>13</sup> Or, *portion*.

probably a large part of the army followed him. **Take a horseman**—Jehu's company were yet a great way off, and the position of Jezreel—the modern *Zerin*—(see note on 1 Kings xviii, 45,) commanded a wide view both to the east and west. Jehu and his company must have approached Jezreel from the east, through the deep broad valley of the Wady Jalud. From the heights of Jezreel one can see the acropolis of Bethshean, some ten miles down this valley, and also the mountains beyond the Jordan.

**18. What hast thou to do with peace**—The supercilious language of a conqueror who is perfect master of the situation, and can dictate the course to be pursued.

**20. He driveth furiously**—Or, as the margin, *in madness*. Stanley suggests that in the Syrian and other wars of that age, when chariots and horses were so much in use, Jehu had acquired a skill and fierceness in his practice which astonished all, and made him known through the whole army and country as the mighty warrior who drove his horses like a madman.

**21. Met him in the portion of Naboth**—Fatal spot for the son of

Alab, for long before there had gone forth the oracle, that in that spot the dogs should lick his blood. 1 Kings xxi, 19, 29.

**22. The whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel**—Her idolatry, both spiritual and carnal. She was in fact the impersonation of many forms of wickedness. Idolatry and witchcraft naturally go together, and in the worship of the female deity Asherah, to which Jezebel was particularly attached, (1 Kings xviii, 19,) there were the most impure practices and licentious rites, which might well be called whoredoms.

**25. For remember**—Jehu remembers, and in substance repeats, the word of the Lord by Elijah, (1 Kings xxi, 19, 29,) and, conscious that he himself is the minister of judgment, he fulfils the word of the Lord. "This," says Kitto, "completes the first act of this awful tragedy, which reads like the old Greek dramas—but far less old than this—of accomplished fate. The appointed executor of the doom was himself the witness of its being imposed. All is complete." **Laid this burden upon him**—This burden of judgment; that is, pronounced upon him this doom.

**27** But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled by the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam. And he fled to \*Megiddo, and died there.

α 2 Chron.

#### DEATH OF AHAZIAH, 27-29.

**27. Fled by the way of the garden house.**—That is, according to some, the summerhouse, built for purposes of rest or shade in the royal garden into which Naboth's vineyard had been converted. 1 Kings xxi, 2. But *house of the garden* is a literal translation of the original word *Beth-haggan*, and it seems better, in view of what 2 Chron. xxii, 9 relates of the flight of Ahaziah to Samaria, to understand it, with the Septuagint, as the name of a place between Jezreel and Samaria. A few miles south of Jezreel is Engannim, the modern *Jenin*, with which Beth-haggan is probably to be identified. It is still a place of gardens and abundant water, whence, doubtless, it received its names.

**Jehu followed after him.**—To this 2 Chron. xxii, 9, adds: "And he sought Ahaziah: and they caught him, for he was hid in Samaria, and brought him to Jehu: and when they had slain him, they buried him." Here, it will be noticed, the author of Chronicles does not say where or how he was slain and buried, and this the book of Kings supplies. So we should understand that Ahaziah first fled by the way of Beth-haggan to Samaria, and there hid himself, but was followed by Jehu and his men, and discovered, and brought forth from his hiding-place into the presence of Jehu. It would seem that Jehu himself did not follow all the way to Samaria, but his men continued the pursuit, and when they had captured Ahaziah they brought him back to Jezreel. Then Jehu said: *Smite him also in the chariot at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam.* These words should thus be connected together, and not separated, as in the English version, with the addition, *and they did so.* Ibleam was a town allotted to the tribe of Manasseh, (Judges i, 27,) though it

**28** And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David. **29** And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.

**30** And when Jehu was come to Jez-

22, 9.

seems to have been located in the territory of Issachar or Asher. Josh. xvii, 11. Its exact position is unknown, but it lay probably not far from Megiddo, and between it and Jezreel.

**The going up to Gur** was some well-known eminence near by it, and it was perhaps from some evil association of Ahaziah or his kindred with that spot that Jehu wished him to be slain there.

**Fled to Megiddo, and died there.**—The arrows of Jehu's archers did not prove instantly fatal, and the wounded king seized an opportunity for escape, and fled in his chariot as far as Megiddo, where he expired. According to Josephus he left his chariot, and fled on horseback to Megiddo. Megiddo, the modern *el-Lejjun*, was about six miles west of Jezreel. See on Joshua xii, 21.

**28. Buried him . . . with his fathers**—Out of respect for the memory of his father, the pious Jehoshaphat. Compare 2 Chron. xxii, 9.

**29. In the eleventh year of Joram**—But chap. viii, 25, says, the *twelfth* year of Joram. "This difference of dates probably arose from a different computation of the beginning of the years of his reign."—*Keil*.

#### THE FATE OF JEZEBEL, 30-37.

The tidings of the revolution under Jehu, and of the death of Joram, spread with the greatest rapidity throughout Jezreel, and quickly reached the ears of the haughty Jezebel. One would suppose that on hearing it she would have trembled with terror, and gone to hide herself in some dark recess of the palace. But her fierce, masculine, vindictive spirit asserts its pre-eminence to the very last; and if she, too, has to perish with the rest of Ahab's house, she resolves to die the regal mistress she has lived.

reel, Jezebel heard of it; and she<sup>14</sup> painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at a window. **31** And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she said, *Had Zimri peace, who slew his master?* **32** And he lifted up his face to the window, and said, *Who is on my side?*

*v* Ezek. 23. 40.—14 Heb. *put her eyes in painting.*



**30. Painted her face**—Better, *set her eyes in paint.* "The paint used by the Hebrew women was a powder producing a black colour; it was commonly prepared either from antimony,

or from lead ore and zinc, which they mixed with water, and spread by means of a needle or probe of silver or ivory upon the borders of the eyelids, so that the white of the eye might appear still whiter by being surrounded with a black margin."—*Gesenius.* "This," says Kitto, "is considered to add greatly to the brilliancy and power of the eye, and to deepen the effect of the long black eyelashes of which the Easterns are excusably proud. The ancient Egyptians practised this long before the date of the present transaction. Figures of painted eyes appear in the monuments, and the implements



used in the operation have been actually found in the tombs, with some of the composition remaining in the vessels." **Tired her head**—Adorned her head and hair with a queenly headdress.

who? And there looked out to him two or three<sup>15</sup> eunuchs. **33** And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot. **34** And when he was come in, he did eat and

*z* 1 Kings 16. 9-20.—15 Or, *chamberlains.*

**Looked out at a window**—Some have thought her object, in thus arraying her person in splendid attire, was to captivate Jehu by her charms, and lead him, after the manner of Eastern usurpers, to take her for his wife. But her scornful words to him in the next verse accord not with this thought. She rather looked out of the window, arrayed in royal attire, to bid defiance to her enemy.

**31. Jehu entered in at the gate**—Or rather, as the context shows, *came up to the gate*; that is, the gate of the palace leading into the enclosed court of the palace beyond. This gate seems to have been the royal entrance into the city of Jezreel, so that the palace was at this point built against the outer wall of the city, and to the window over the gate Jezebel had come, in order to look and speak defiance to the approaching destroyer. **Had Zimri peace, who slew his master**—This is her last glory, to remind her enemy of the fate of one who had, like him, usurped the royal power, and killed his king, and, as Kitto says, "to cast one bitter, burning word upon the head of the destroyer, such as should haunt and scorch him all his life."

**33. They threw her down**—The eunuchs saw in Jehu their future master, and instantly obeyed his command. **He trode her under foot**—He drove his horses and chariot in his usual furious way over the already fearfully mangled body of the queen, crushing out the last spark of life, and scarcely turning to look behind him, drove on into the court of the palace, his horses and chariot becoming sprinkled with her blood. This is one of the most terribly vivid and fearful pictures in all the annals of tragedy.

**34. He did eat and drink**—This scene of hilarity and cheer in the midst

drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for <sup>a</sup> she is a king's daughter. **35** And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. **36** Wherefore they came again, and told him. And he said, This is the word of the Lord, which he spake <sup>16</sup> by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, <sup>b</sup> In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel:

*a* 1 Kings 16. 31. — *16* Heb. *by the hand of*.

of such fearful bloodshed makes one shudder. But the minister of doom to Ahab's guilty house must needs be such a one as Jehu. Tenderness and sympathy would unfit the avenger of blood for his work of death. **She is a king's daughter**—Yes, and a king's widow and a king's mother. But not till after his feast does Jehu reflect that so much royalty and greatness have fallen. He had left the mangled corpse of the once mighty Jezebel on the mounds of offal outside the gate, a prey to the dogs which in the East ever prowl about such spots.

**35. Skull . . . feet . . . hands**—An eastern traveller, describing the remains of some human bodies that had been devoured by dogs, says: "The only portion of the several corpses I noticed that remained entire and untouched, were the bottoms of the feet, and the insides of the hands—a proof of the rooted antipathy the dog has to prey upon the human hands and feet." Dr. Thomson supposes that the dogs under Jezebel's palace "may have been taught to devour the wretched victims of her cruelty, in which case the retribution would be remarkably striking."

**36. This is the word of the Lord**—The iron-hearted Jehu remembers and quotes the prophecies of Elijah. He quotes not the very words, but, as was most natural, gave their sense in his own language.

**37. They shall not say, This is Jezebel**—No person should ever be able to recognise her corpse or know her dust. "Though so great a woman by her birth, connexions, and alliances, she had not the honour of a tomb! There was not even a solitary stone to

**37** And the carcass of Jezebel shall be <sup>c</sup>as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel: so that they shall not say, This is Jezebel.

## CHAPTER X.

**A**ND Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel, to the elders, and to <sup>1</sup> them that brought up Ahab's children, saying,

*b* 1 Kin. 21. 23. — *c* Psa. 83. 10. — *1* Heb. *nourishers*.

say, *Here lies Jezebel!* not even a mound of earth to designate the place of her sepulture! Judgment is God's strange work; but when he contends, how terrible are his judgments!"

## CHAPTER X.

### SLAUGHTER OF AHAB'S SONS, 1-11.

Although Joram and Ahaziah and Jezebel have fallen, the Divine vengeance, which so long has slumbered, will not have finished its work of retribution till every member of Ahab's guilty house is brought to judgment.

**1. Seventy sons in Samaria**—The word *sons* here, as often, is meant to include all Ahab's living posterity—sons, grandsons, and great-grandsons. Some of these children of Ahab were no doubt very young. **Wrote letters**—Intercourse by means of written epistles was at this period very common. **Sent to Samaria**—Where was the chief seat of government, the royal palace, and the court, and where the nobles of the kingdom were generally to be found. The kings of Israel had a palace at Jezreel, (1 Kings xxi, 1,) and often abode there, but that did not diminish the importance of Samaria. It was more of a summer residence of the king and his family than the chief capital of the kingdom. **The rulers of Jezreel**—Or, *princes* of Jezreel, nobles of the kingdom, whose common residence was Jezreel, but who, for some reason not stated, were now at the royal palace at Samaria, where, doubtless, they were often wont to resort. **To the elders**—The elders of the city of Samaria. These are not to be identified with the *rulers* or *princes* just mentioned, but were men of less

**2** Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you, and *there are* with you chariots and horses, a fenced city also, and armour; **3** Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons, and set *him* on his father's throne, "and fight for your master's house. **4** But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, Behold, two kings stood not before him: how then shall we stand? **5** And he that *was* over the house, and he that *was* over the city, the elders also, and the bringers up of the children, sent to Jehu, saying, We are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou *that which is* good in

*a* 2 Sam. 2. 12, 17; 1 Kings 12. 21; John 18. 36.

dignity and power, having their authority confined to matters pertaining more especially to Samaria. **Them that brought up Ahab's children**—That is, the guardians and instructors, who had the oversight and training of the young princes. Thus Jehu's letters were directed to three classes of persons, all of them more or less responsible for the care of the royal family, namely, *the nobles, the elders, and the guardians*. Expositors have been much troubled to explain why Jehu sent letters from Jezreel to Samaria to the princes of Jezreel. Some have proposed to read rulers of Israel instead of rulers of Jezreel. Keil emends the text according to the Septuagint and Vulgate, and reads rulers of the city,

הַעִיר אֵל being a corruption of הָעִיר אֵל.

But it seems better to understand that the rulers of Jezreel were the supreme court officers of the kingdom, and that they were so called because they commonly resided in Jezreel. It need not seem strange that they were at this time in Samaria, for many supposable items of official business may have called them to the chief seat of the nation; or, perhaps, as some have supposed, they had fled thither from the face of Jehu.

**2, 3. As soon as this letter cometh**—Most expositors have regarded this letter of Jehu as ironical. Thus Kitto: "There was a latent irony in this letter, for the writer must well have known the real state of the case, and

thine eyes. **6** Then he wrote a letter the second time to them, saying, If ye be mine, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow this time. Now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great-men of the city, which brought them up. **7** And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him *them* to Jezreel. **8** And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them in two

2 Heb. *for me*.—*b* 1 Kings 21. 21; Mark 6. 27, 28.

how little likely it was that they would take up the cause of a fallen house, known to have been doomed of God." But whatever Jehu may have known or thought of their probable feeling and action in the case, the language of this epistle, particularly the closing challenge—*fight for your master's house*—is that of bold and menacing defiance rather than of irony, and involves an order for them either to surrender or else prepare for war. Bähr paraphrases it thus: "I am king; but if ye, who have in your possession the chariots, and horses, and arms, are desirous of placing a prince of the house of Ahab on the throne, you thereby begin a war with me." Very likely he expected to intimidate them, and bring them to submission by this threat.

**4. Two kings**—Joram and Ahaziah.

**5. He that was over the house**—That one of the supreme princes or rulers who, like Ahishar in Solomon's time, (1 Kings iv, 6,) was the king's chamberlain. **He that was over the city**—The marshal, or, like Amon in the time of Ahab, (1 Kings xxii, 26,) the chief military governor of the city. **We will not make any king**—They at once acknowledge Jehu as king, and pledged submission to his will.

**8. Lay ye them in two heaps**—"This cutting off of heads in collective masses, and making them into heaps, is or has been frightfully common in the East; and an Oriental, familiar with blood and beheading from his cradle, would read this portion of Scripture

heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning. **9** And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, *Ye be righteous: behold,* <sup>c</sup>I conspired against my master, and slew him: but who slew all these? **10** Know now that there shall <sup>d</sup>fall unto the earth

<sup>c</sup> Chap. 9. 14, 24. — <sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 3. 19. — <sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 21. 19, 21, 29.

with little, if any, of the disgust and horror, and certainly with none of the surprise, with which it inspires us. After a battle, or a massacre, or the rout of a band of robbers, the heads are, as in the present instance, heaped up pyramidally, faces outward, on each side the palace gate; and the builder of this horrid pile, if a man of taste and fancy, usually reserves a head with a fine long beard to form the crown of his handiwork. Nothing so much shocks a European in the East as the frightful cheapness of human life, and with it, of human heads. In Persia it has not seldom been known for the king to express his displeasure at a town or village by demanding from it a pyramid of heads of given dimensions."—*Kitto*. **Until the morning**—The heads had probably reached Jezreel at night.

**9. Ye be righteous**—That is, ye are not guilty of the blood of the house of Ahab. So far as these massacres have gone I know that ye are innocent. **I conspired**—I confess and cannot deny that I conspired against Joram, and slew him. **But who slew all these**—I did not, and I know that ye did not; who, then, is guilty in this case? He wished the people to understand that in this work of blood there were other ministers of Divine judgment besides himself. Most commentators explain these words, like the letter of Jehu above, as the language of sarcasm or irony, and suppose that Jehu either intended to involve them in the odium and guilt of this slaughter, or at least to keep them in ignorance of the fact that he had himself given orders for their slaughter. But this is altogether unnecessary, and unauthorized by any thing that appears in the text. Doubtless what Jehu had done towards this

nothing of the word of the LORD, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for the LORD hath done *that* which he spake <sup>e</sup>by his servant Elijah. **11** So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men, and his <sup>f</sup>kinsfolks, and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

<sup>g</sup> Hebrew, *by the hand of*. — <sup>h</sup> Or, *acquaintance*.

massacre was well known to all the people of Jezreel. He had, indeed, in a certain sense, ordered it, (verse 6,) but yet in such a way as to involve the nobles and elders and guardians in the guilt as much as himself. Their ready and prompt obedience, in beheading these seventy persons, was, perhaps, hardly expected by Jehu; and when he saw it, he at once began to feel that he was comparatively guiltless of their blood.

**10. The Lord hath done**—This language confirms our exposition of the preceding verse. Jehu wishes the people to understand that these massacres are no work of private revenge, but a most signal fulfilling of Jehovah's word by the prophet Elijah. See 1 Kings xxi, 19–29. Strange that the man, who so clearly recognized his mission as a minister of Divine judgment, utterly failed to see that by cleaving to the sins of Jeroboam he exposed himself to the same judgment, and that, sooner or later, Divine righteousness would "avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." Compare note on verses 29, 30.

**11. Slew all that remained**—There was yet remaining in Jezreel not a few of the court favourites and friends of the royal family, and these Jehu proceeded at once to slay, and probably in presence of all the people. None dared oppose or resist him, for the people felt, as he had shown, that this was a fulfilling of prophecy. **Great men**—State officers who were then in Jezreel. **Kinsfolks**—Distant relatives, or intimate acquaintances, who had been accustomed to receive court favours. **Priests**—His private court priests, who were devoted to the calf-worship which Jeroboam had established, and Ahab had continued to encourage.

**12** And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria. *And as he was at the shearing house in the way,* **13** 'Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who are ye? And they answered, We are the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the children of the queen. **14** And he

said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, *even two and forty men*; neither left he any of them. **15** And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy

5 Heb. *house of shepherds binding sheep.*  
—f Chapter 8. 29; 2 Chronicles 22. 8. —6 Heb. *found.*

7 Heb. *to the peace of, &c.* —8 Heb. *found.*  
—g Jer. 35. 6, &c. —h 1 Chron. 2. 55. —9 Heb. *blessed.*

#### SLAUGHTER OF AHAZIAH'S BRETHREN AND AHAB'S ADHERENTS IN SAMARIA, 12-17.

**12. Came to Samaria**—That is, on his way towards Samaria; for a part of the events here recorded occurred on Jehu's way thither. Having finished the work of judgment at Jezreel, he proceeds to the metropolis of the kingdom, there to complete more fully his dreadful mission. **The shearing house**—More literally, *house of binding of the shepherds*. This, like the *house of the garden* in chap. ix, 27, is a translation of a Hebrew proper name. The original word is *Beth-eked*, the name of a place between Jezreel and Samaria, probably identical with *Beit-kad*, some five or six miles southeast of Jezreel. It was probably called *Beth-eked of the shepherds*, from its being a common resort of the shepherds of the neighbouring country.

**13. Brethren of Ahaziah**—2 Chron. xxii, 8 terms them "the princes of Judah, and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah, that ministered to Ahaziah." Whence it appears that the word brethren is here to be taken in the wide sense of *near relatives* and intimate associates and friends. This is a senso the word often bears; and it is likely that not a few of those "that ministered to Ahaziah" were chosen from among his own kindred. His own brothers, all older than himself, had been slain by the Arabians. 2 Chron. xxii, 1. **We go down to salute the children of the king**—Of King Joram, to whom they were also related. They seem not to have heard of the king's death. **Of the queen**—Probably the queen-mother, Jezebel, is meant.

**14. Take them alive**—So that none may escape, as might have been the case had they proceeded to slay them as they took them one by one. **At the pit of the shearing house**—Rather, *at the pit of Beth-eked*. See note on verse 12. This pit was some well-known cistern or well belonging to the town.

**15. Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him**—The name is written *Jonadab* in Jer. xxxv, 6, 10, 19. The house of Rechab were descendants of the Kenites, (1 Chron. ii, 55,) who journeyed with the Israelites through the wilderness, (Num. x, 29,) and had settled in various parts of the land. Judges i, 16; iv, 11; 1 Sam. xv, 6. This Jehonadab had brought all his father's house to pledge themselves to abstain from wine, and to pursue the nomadic habits of their ancestors, and always dwell in tents. See Jer. xxxv. He was doubtless, therefore, well known in Israel as a man of great austerity; he had probably mourned over the prevailing idolatry, and now, hearing of what Jehu had done and said, he recognised in him a minister of Jehovah to execute judgment on the wicked house of Ahab, and went forth to meet him, and declare to him that his heart was with him in this ministry of judgment. **Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart**—Jehu was anxious to know if, in this bloody work, which he might well fear would not be very popular in Israel, he had the sympathy and approval of the distinguished pietist Jehonadab. To have his sympathy would be no small advantage to his cause. So he asks: Is thy heart really in sympathy with mine in this ministry of Divine

heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, <sup>1</sup>give me thine hand. And he gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. **16** And he said, Come with me, and see my <sup>2</sup>zeal for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot. **17** And when he came to Samaria, <sup>1</sup>he slew all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, <sup>m</sup>which he spake to Elijah.

† Ezra 10. 19. — <sup>1</sup>1 Kings 19. 10. — <sup>2</sup>Chap. 9. 8; 2 Chron. 22. 8.

judgment? **If it be**—There is nothing in the Hebrew that answers well to *if*. It should be rendered: *Jehonadab answered, It is, yea, it is; give me thy hand.* Jehonadab did not leave Jehu to do all the talking. He first offered his hand to the conqueror, and then Jehu gave him his hand and took him into his chariot. So Jehu found him a helper in his work of doom.

**16. See my zeal for the Lord**—He thus communicates his further purpose to continue the work of destruction. Some have thought that this was all pretended zeal and showy hypocrisy, but in verse 30 the Lord commends Jehu for having done well, and declares that his bloody work was right in his eyes, and according to the feelings of his own heart. In other things Jehu sinned, (verse 31,) and it is not pretended that all his *measures* and *motives* in his work of doom had the approval of God; but in executing judgment on Ahab's house, his zeal was praised, though it was not without a selfish ambition, and perhaps other elements of wickedness. But we need not call Jehu a heartless boaster and a murderous hypocrite. Shall he be blamed as murderous and cruel who obeys to the very letter Jehovah's positive command? Comp. chap. ix. 6–10. If the fall of the tower in Siloam were really a Divine judgment on the eighteen hapless victims whom it ground to powder, (Luke xiii. 4,) need we charge the tower with blood-guiltiness and cruelty? Sometimes, indeed, God uses wicked hands to execute his counsels, and holds them guilty for their deeds, (Acts ii. 23;) but never does he blame a minister of vengeance for doing what

**18** And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, <sup>n</sup>Ahab served Baal a little; *but* Jehu shall serve him much. **19** Now therefore call unto me all the <sup>o</sup>prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did it in subtilty, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. **20** And

<sup>m</sup> 1 Kings 21. 21. — <sup>n</sup> 1 Kings 16. 31, 32.  
<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings 22. 6.

his own word has positively commanded him to do. Let us beware how we curse or blame what God has not blamed. There are in our times too many shallow and unbiblical attempts to ignore the awful severities of Divine justice, as revealed in God's word.

**17. All that remained unto Ahab in Samaria**—That is, all relatives or adherents and partisans of Ahab's family that were not included in the seventy persons (verse 7) whom the nobles had slain.

#### SLAUGHTER OF THE BAAL WORSHIPERS, 18–28.

There remains yet one more deed of blood to rid the kingdom of Israel from the curse of Ahab's rule. The priests and worshippers of Baal were so involved in the fortunes of Ahab's dynasty, that, with them living, Jehu must sit insecurely on the throne. He accordingly takes subtle measures to exterminate them all; and thus the sword of Jehu completes the work which Elijah began at the brook Kishon. 1 Kings xviii. 40, note.

**18. Ahab served Baal a little**—There were dark depths of fearful meaning underneath these words of treachery.

**19. The prophets...servants...priests**—Every representative and devotee of the Baal worship must be present at this great sacrifice. **Jehu did it in subtilty**—His craft and guile on this occasion were in fearfulness equal to the duplicity and baseness which prepared the way for the massacre of St. Bartholomew. His Divine commission doubtless authorized him to cut off the worshippers of

Jehu said, <sup>10</sup> Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal. And they proclaimed it.

**21** And Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was <sup>11</sup> full from one end to another.

**22** And he said unto him that was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. And he brought them forth vestments. **23** And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only. **24** And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed

fourscore men without, and said, *If any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape, he that letteth him go, his life shall be for the life of him.*

**25** And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with <sup>12</sup> the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. **26** And they brought forth the <sup>13</sup> images out of the house of Baal, and burned them. **27** And they brake down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day. **28** Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.

<sup>10</sup> Hebrew, *Sanctify*.—*p* 1 Kings 16. 32.—<sup>11</sup> Or, so full, that they stood mouth to mouth.—*q* 1 Kings 20. 39.

<sup>12</sup> Hebrew, *the month*.—<sup>13</sup> Hebrew, *statues*.—*r* 1 Kings 14. 23.—*s* Ezra 6. 11; Daniel 2. 5; 3. 29.

Baal, but not by guile. God praised his zeal in rooting out idolatry, but not his subtilty.

**21. House of Baal**—The great temple which Ahab built in Samaria for the honour of this Phenician idol. 1 Kings xvi, 32. **From one end to another**—Literally, from mouth to mouth. An idiomatic phrase meaning from aperture or opening to opening, or from entrance to exit.

**22. Him that was over the vestry**—The officer having charge of the sacred vestments, and the apartments in which they were kept. **Bring forth vestments**—These were the priestly robes in which the ministers of Baal officiated. Jehu would have them perish in their sacred robes.

**25. He had made an end of offering**—Here Jehu himself is said to do what in fact others did at his command. According to verse 24 the worshippers of Baal offered the sacrifices, but here the act is attributed to Jehu. So in the popular language of all times and of all nations, what one does by the agency of others he does himself. **The guard and the captains**—Literally, *the runners and the third men*; that is, the immediate satellites of Jehu, composed of a distinguished and trusty class of warriors. **Cast them out**—Cast out of the tem-

ple in which they had been slain the dead bodies of the Baal worshippers. **The city of the house of Baal**—Not that quarter of the city of Samaria where the temple of Baal was located, as many of the older interpreters explain; but the citadel, the enclosed inner sanctuary of the temple. The multitude of Baal worshippers assembled, and the sacrifices were offered in the atrium or fore-court of the temple, and there the slaughter took place; after which the victors went into the inner apartment or citadel of the house of Baal, and brought forth the images of the idol.

**26. Brought . . . the images**—These are supposed to have been wooden statues or pillars consecrated to Baal or some of his associate deities.

**27. The image of Baal**—This was probably a vast molten statue of the god, erected outside of the temple, perhaps at the portal. **A draught house**—A place of refuse and filth. The Masoretes have substituted a word which signifies *sewers*.

Thus did Jehu terribly destroy these worshippers of Baal, mingling their blood with the sacrifices of the altar, and making the very site of their great temple a place of filth. This would cover the very name of Baal with infamy and reproach.

**29** Howbeit, *from* the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, 'the golden calves that were in Beth-el, and that were in Dan. **30** And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that which is* right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, 'thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel. **31** But Jehu <sup>14</sup>took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from 'the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin. **32** In those days the Lord began

<sup>t</sup> 1 Kings 13. 28, 29.—<sup>u</sup> See verse 35; chap. 13. 1, 10; 14. 23; 15. 8, 12.—<sup>14</sup> Hebrew, *observed not*.—<sup>v</sup> 1 Kings 14. 16.—<sup>15</sup> Hebrew, *to cut off the ends*.

#### JEHU'S SINS, MISFORTUNES, AND DEATH, 29–36.

**29. Howbeit.**—While the Scripture history makes prominent the fact that Jehu was God's instrument to punish the wicked house of Ahab, and overthrow his dynasty, it conceals not his shortcomings and his sins. Jehu, as Kitto very justly remarks, "was one of those decisive, terrible, ambitious, yet prudent, calculating, and passionless men, whom God from time to time raises up to change the fate of empires and to execute his judgments on the earth. He boasted of his zeal—'Come and see my zeal for the Lord'—but at the bottom it was zeal for Jehu. His zeal was great so long as it led to acts which squared with his own interests, but it cooled marvellously when required to take a direction in his judgment less favourable to them."

**30. The Lord said unto Jehu.**—Probably by one of the prophets of the time. **Children of the fourth generation.**—Jehu's son Jehoahaz reigned seventeen years; Jehoash, sixteen; Jeroboam, forty-one; and Zachariah, six months. Zachariah, of the fourth generation, was slain by Shallum, and thus was this word of the Lord fulfilled; (compare chap. xv. 12;) and thus, too, according to the prophecy of Hosea, (i. 4) did the Lord "avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu." For when the minister of Divine judg-

ment himself turned to idolatry, the very blood of his guilty victims might well call for vengeance on him for doing the same things for which he had executed the Divine judgment on them. Rom. ii. 1.

**32. Began to cut Israel short.**—That is, in the latter part of Jehu's reign Israel began to suffer those fearful punishments of invasion and conquest from the north and northeast, which finally ended in the total captivity of the land. Jehu's name occurs on the Assyrian monuments among others who paid tribute to the king of Assyria, and Rawlinson (*Historical Evidences*, page 113) inclines to the opinion "that from this date both the Jewish and the Israelitish kings held their crowns as fiefs, dependent on the will of the Assyrian monarch, with whom it formally lay to 'confirm' each new prince 'in his kingdom.'" See chap. xiv. 5, note.

**33. From Jordan eastward.**—This exposed frontier, occupied by the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, was the first to fall into the hands of foreigners. They were more nomadic, and, from constant contact with the neighbouring nations, lost the more rapidly their sympathy with the western tribes. Hazael smote and subjugated them, but Pul and Tiglath-pileser carried them away into captivity. See 1 Chron v. 25, 26.

<sup>16</sup> Chapter 8. 12.—<sup>15</sup> Hebrew, *toward the rising of the sun*.—<sup>17</sup> Or, *even to Gilead and Bashan*.—<sup>18</sup> Amos 1. 3.—<sup>18</sup> Hebrew, *the days were*.

## CHAPTER XI.

**A**ND when <sup>a</sup> Athaliah <sup>b</sup> the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the <sup>c</sup> seed royal. **2** But <sup>d</sup> Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took <sup>e</sup> Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, even him and his nurse, in the

<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 22. 10.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 8. 26.—<sup>c</sup> 1 Heb. *seed of the kingdom*.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. 22. 11, *Je-*

bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. **3** And he was with her hid in the house of the LORD six years. <sup>e</sup> And Athaliah did reign over the land.

**4** And <sup>f</sup> the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him into the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the

*jehoshebeath*.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *Jehoshaphat*.—<sup>c</sup> Psa. 12. 8; Mal. 3. 15.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. 23. 1, &c.

## CHAPTER XI.

## ATHALIAH'S USURPATION, 1-3.

**1. Destroyed all the seed royal**

—The ferocious Athaliah, a worthy daughter of the bloody Jezebel, acted at Jerusalem as queen mother, (see 1 Kings xv, 10, 13, notes,) and probably exercised her royal functions during her son's absence in Jezreel. As soon as she heard of Ahaziah's death she resolved to usurp his throne, and, in perfect accordance with her own savage character, and the notions of the time as to making a throne secure, she secured the death, as she supposed, of all her grandchildren, and all the royal family who might claim a title to the throne. Her great authority and influence, as queen mother, explains the apparent ease with which she seems to have accomplished her purpose.

**2. Sister of Ahaziah**—Probably a half sister, being Joram's daughter by another wife than Athaliah. She was the wife of Jehoiada the priest, (2 Chron. xxii. 11,) and this fact explains how he came to be hid in the temple. **The bed-chamber**—"The bed-chamber in the temple, in which Jehosheba hid Joash, does not seem to mean a lodging chamber, but a chamber used as a repository for beds. I am indebted to Sir John Chardin for this thought, which seems to be a just one; for the original words signify a *chamber of beds*, and the expression differs from that which is used when a lodging chamber is meant. He supposes that **place** is meant where beds are kept; for in the East, and particularly in Persia and Turkey, beds are not raised from the ground with bed posts, a canopy, and curtains; people lie on the ground. In

the evening they spread out a mattress or two of cotton, very light, of which they have several in great houses, and a room on purpose for them."—*Harmer's Observations*.

**3. Hid in the house of the Lord six years**—Jehosheba's husband being high priest, this concealment of her nephew Joash was the more safe.

**FALL OF ATHALIAH, AND ELEVATION OF JOASH TO THE THRONE, 4-21.**

**4. The seventh year**—The seventh year of Joash's age. Compare verse 21. **Rulers over hundreds**—Their names are given in 2 Chron. xxiii, 1, 2, together with the statement that the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief fathers of Israel, were gathered together at Jerusalem. These rulers of hundreds were probably officers of the army, having charge of a hundred men. **Captains and the guard**—Gesenius renders these words, *executioners and runners*; which composed an important part of the body-guard of the king. Others explain the word rendered *captains*, כָּרִי *Carians*, that is, the men of Caria, in Asia Minor, who, like the Cretans, were wont to serve as lifeguards to the ancient Asiatic rulers. See on Cherethites and Pelethites. 2 Sam. viii, 18. **Made a covenant. . . took an oath**—These expressions explain each other. Jehoiada made a covenant with them by binding them under a solemn oath to help him carry out his plans of ruining Athaliah, and setting the youthful Joash on the throne. The high priest was wise enough to know that in carrying out a plan of so vast moment he must have the confidence and support of all

house of the Lord, and showed them the king's son. **5** And he commanded them, saying, *This is the thing that ye shall do*; A third part of you that enter in *on the sabbath* shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house;

e 1 Chron. 9. 25.—4 Or, *from breaking up*.

the men of power. Athaliah's regency was doubtless oppressive and unpopular, and the leading minds of the kingdom were glad to have it come to an end.

**5. This is the thing that ye shall do**—This description (verses 5-14) of the arrangement of the Levite guards is obscure, and some parts of it difficult to harmonize with the parallel and fuller account in 2 Chron. xxiii, 4-13. The difficulty comes from our ignorance of some of the terms employed. *The gate of Sur* and *the gate behind the guard* are matters of conjecture, on which it is needless to posit a decided opinion. But so long as these gates are unknown, there must rest an obscurity upon the whole passage. We attempt merely to point out what seems to be the most natural and plausible meaning of the words. **You that enter in on the sabbath**—Those Levites whose turn to enter upon their week of service in the temple came on the particular Sabbath here indicated. The different kinds of service in which they were employed are described in 1 Chron. ix, 17-33, from which passage it appears that a large body of the Levites were constantly required in the temple, and that they relieved each other by turns, one company *entering in on the Sabbath* when another company, having filled their week, went forth. Verse 7. "By choosing the Sabbath day," says Wordsworth, "and by retaining those of the Levitical course whose turn it was to retire from its allotted service, Jehoiada doubled the number of the official forces of the temple without exciting suspicion." **Shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house**—The *king's house* must certainly mean the royal palace, from which there was a magnificent passageway leading up to the house of the Lord. 1 Kings x, 5, note. A third part of the Levites here

**6** And a third part *shall be* at the gate of Sur; and a third part at the gate behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house, *that it be not broken down*. **7** And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath, even

5 Or, *companies*. Hebrew, *hands*.

specified, instead of entering the temple as usual, were to stay outside, and guard this way to the royal residence, lest some satellite of Athaliah should discover or interrupt the plot. They are the ones who in 2 Chron. xxiii, 5 are to be *at the king's house*.

**6. Gate of Sur**—The same, doubtless, as the *gate of the foundation*, or *gate of Yesod*, in Chronicles. The exact locality of this gate cannot be decided, for it is nowhere mentioned again; but the most plausible supposition is, that it was the main entrance into the inner court of the temple.

**The gate behind the guard**—To this corresponds *porters of the doors*, in Chronicles. The guard, according to verse 11, stood round about the king, and extended from the right to the left side of the temple, by the altar and temple, and *the gate behind the guard* would seem to be some well-known side or rear entrance into the court of the temple, from which an attack or annoyance might be expected. It is also likely that some of these might stand as porters of the doors of the temple, gate-keepers of the Lord's house, whose position would naturally be behind the guard that encompassed the king. **So shall ye keep the watch of the house**—That is, all the three divisions just mentioned, by being stationed as described, shall guard all the approaches to the house of the Lord. **That it be not broken down**—The Hebrew for this sentence is

all in one word, מִסָּפָה, *a defence*; *a driving off*. This body of Levites were to serve as a defensive watch—a company of sentinels set to drive away all that might presume to interfere with the plans of the high priest Jehoiada.

**7. Two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath**—Those who went forth on the Sabbath were the

they shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord about the king. 8 And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in. 9 And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded: and they took every man his men that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. 10 And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, that were in

the temple of the Lord. 11 And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple, along by the altar and the temple. 12 And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and gave him the testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, <sup>7th</sup> God save the king. 13 And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard and of the people, she came to the people into the temple of the Lord. 14 And when she looked, behold, the king stood by <sup>a</sup> a pillar, as the manner was, and the princes and

f 2 Chron. 23. 8.—6 Heb. *shoulder*.—g Exod. 40. 6.—7 Heb. *Let the king live*.

h 1 Samuel 10. 24.—i 2 Chronicles 23. 12, &c. k Chap. 23. 3; 2 Chron. 31. 31.

course of Levites who were relieved on that day from their term of temple service by the coming in of another course. Instead of departing from the temple and returning home, as usual, they were to form themselves into *two parts* or divisions, (literally, *hands*,) and to be the immediate bodyguard of the youthful king. Their particular duty is more fully given in verse 8, and they are identical with the guard mentioned in verse 11.

8. **The ranges**—Ranks of armed men.

9. **Every man his men**—That is, each captain took charge of the band of Levites committed to his command by Jehoiada.

10. **King David's spears and shields**—The trophies and relics of David's many wars. These had been preserved as treasures in the temple. It would have excited suspicion if the captains and the Levites had entered the temple armed; hence they were supplied with the arms that were kept in the temple.

11. **From the right corner of the temple to the left**—This means, doubtless, that a rank or several ranks of armed Levites were stationed in a semicircle in front of the temple, extending from one side to the other. The king, whom they encompassed, probably occupied a position by one of the pillars, Jachin and Boaz, in front of the temple. 1 Kings vii, 21. **By the altar and the temple**—Literally,

*to the altar and the house*. Their ranks extended not only in a semicircular form around the king from one side of the temple to the other, but also reached to the altar of burnt offerings in the midst of the court, and to other parts of the temple also, besides the right and left corners. Chronicles adds, that besides these armed Levites with their officers, a multitude of the people were in the courts of the temple.

12. **He brought forth the king's son**—The youthful Joash, now seven years old, having been for six of these years hid in the temple. Verse 3. **And put the crown upon him**—In the ceremony of crowning and anointing, Jehoiada, the high priest, officiated. **Gave him the testimony**—The laws of Moses, from which he might read and learn all the days of his life. Compare Deut. xvii, 18, 19. **God save the king**—Compare 1 Sam. x, 24. note.

14. **The king stood by a pillar**—Probably, as we have suggested above, (note on verse 11,) by one of the great pillars, Jachin and Boaz, which supported the front of the temple. By the side of one of these pillars Jehoiada had erected a platform something like that on which Solomon stood when he dedicated the temple; (2 Chron. vi, 13;) and upon such platform the young king would stand in full view of all the people in the court. Gesenius and others take עמוד, *pillar*, in the sense of *platform*, but this is unnecessary.

the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent her clothes, and cried, Treason, treason.

**15** But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges; and him that followeth her kill with the sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain in the <sup>1</sup>house of the LORD. **16** And they laid hands on her; and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house; and there was she slain. **17**<sup>m</sup> And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people, that they should be the LORD's people; <sup>n</sup>between the king also and the people

<sup>l</sup> Ezek. 9, 7.—<sup>m</sup> 2 Chron. 23, 16.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Sam. 5, 3.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 10, 26.—<sup>p</sup> Deut. 12, 3; 2 Chron.

and the word, though of frequent occurrence, has nowhere else such a meaning.

**15. Without the ranges**—See ver. 8. **Him that followeth her**—That is, him that presumes to take her part and defend her. **Not be slain in... house of the Lord**—The high priest would not have the temple stained with human blood.

**16. The way by the which the horses came into the king's house**—The Chronicles calls the place "the entering of the horse gate, by the king's house." Some have inclined to identify this with "the horse gate" of Neh. iii, 28, and Jer. xxxi, 40. Its location is unknown, but seems to have been somewhere near the palace. Perhaps the design of slaying her at the entrance to the royal stables was, that, like her mother Jezebel, she might be also trampled under foot by horses. Compare chap. ix, 33.

**17. Jehoiada made a covenant**—Having succeeded thus far in reforming the kingdom, he would next renew the covenant with Jehovah. He made, in fact, two covenants: first, **between the Lord and the king and the people**, which involved their returning as a nation from Baal worship to the obedience and worship of the Lord; secondly, **between the king also and the people**, which involved that they would sacredly regard the duties and respect each party owed the other.

**18** And all the people of the land went into the <sup>o</sup>house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images <sup>p</sup>brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And <sup>q</sup>the priest appointed <sup>r</sup>officers over the house of the LORD.

**19** And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came by the way of the gate of the guard to the king's house. And <sup>r</sup>he sat on the throne of the kings.

**20** And all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword *beside* the king's house. **21** <sup>s</sup>Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.

<sup>23, 17.</sup>—<sup>q</sup> 2 Chron. 23, 18, &c.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *offices*.—<sup>r</sup> Judges 17, 25; 22, 4, 30.—<sup>s</sup> 2 Chron. 24, 1.

The king must rule righteously, the people cheerfully obey.

**18. Went into the house of Baal**—So firmly had the worship of Baal fastened itself upon the whole Israelitish nation that Jerusalem, as well as Samaria, had its temple to this god. Jehu destroyed the Baal worship in Samaria, (compare chap. x, 18-28;) Jehoiada and his adherents that in Jerusalem. **Appointed officers over the house of the Lord**—Reorganized the temple service, which had been partially interrupted and disturbed by the revolution effected in the kingdom.

**19. Gate of the guard**—Called "the high gate" in Chronicles, but, like the horse gate, difficult to identify with any known locality. It was probably a gate leading toward the palace, and here called "gate of the guard" from being the one guarded by that division of Levites mentioned in verse 5.

## CHAPTER XII.

REIGN OF JOASH, KING OF JUDAH.  
1-21.

This chapter, which contains the history of the reign of Joash, or Jehoash, may be divided into four parts. The first (verses 1-3) states the general character of his reign; the second (4-16) informs us how he repaired the temple; the third (17-18) gives a short notice of the Syrian invasion under

## CHAPTER XII.

**I**N the seventh year of Jehu, \*Jehoash began to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zibiah of Beersheba. **2** And Jehoash did *that which was* right in the sight of the Lord all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him. **3** But <sup>b</sup>the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. **4** And Jehoash said to the priests, <sup>c</sup>All the money of the <sup>d</sup>dedicated things that

<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 24. 1.—<sup>b</sup> 1 Kings 15. 14; 22. 43; chap. 14. 4.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 22. 4.—<sup>d</sup> Or, *holy things*. Heb. *holiness*.—<sup>e</sup> Exod. 30. 13.—<sup>f</sup> 2 Heb. *the money of the souls of his estimation*, Lev. 27. 2.

Hazael, and the fourth (19–21) gives some account of the king's assassination and burial. The parallel history in 2 Chron. xxiv records a number of important items not noticed here at all. Joash, though pious and upright in his early years, yielded, after the death of the high priest, to the voice of evil counsellors, and the people lapsed into idolatry again, and even went so far as to murder the son of Jehoiada because he rebuked their disobedience and idolatry. Hence the Syrian invasion and his own foul death were judgments upon him for his sins.

**2. All his days wherein Jehoiada ... instructed him**—As long as he remained true to the counsels of the high priest he did right and prospered. The words imply, though the fact is not stated, that he afterwards departed from the instructions of his benefactor. How this came to pass is told in Chronicles.

**3. High places were not taken away**—And these were a constant temptation to idolatry. A nation that had been so thoroughly flooded with idolatrous practices as Israel could not be morally safe with these temptations ever before their eyes. The failure to abolish these was one great mistake of Joash and other kings who attempted reformation. Compare notes on 1 Kings iii, 2; xv, 14.

**4. All the money of the dedicated things**—The annual contributions to the sanctuary which Moses ordained in the wilderness. Compare Exodus xxx, 12–16, and 2 Chron. xxiv, 6, 9.

is brought into the house of the Lord, *even* <sup>a</sup>the money of every one that passeth *the account*, <sup>b</sup>the money that every man is set at, *and* all the money that <sup>c</sup>cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord, **5** Let the priests take *it* to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found. **6** But it was *so*, *that* <sup>d</sup>in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash <sup>e</sup>the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *ascendeth upon the heart of a man*.—<sup>e</sup> Exodus 35. 5; 1 Chronicles 29. 9.—<sup>4</sup> Hebrew, *in the twentieth year and third year*.—<sup>f</sup> 2 Chronicles 24. 5.

These contributions might be of three kinds. 1.) **The money of every one that passeth the account**—Explained by Exod. xxx, 13: "Every one that passeth among them that are numbered [in the census] shall give half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary." This half shekel was properly a poll tax. 2.) **The money that every man is set at**—That is, the amount at which every one who makes a singular vow is estimated, according to the law of Levit. xxvii, 1–8. Large revenues may sometimes have come to the sanctuary from this source alone. 3.) **Money that cometh into any man's heart to bring**—That is, free-will offerings, which any one might give over and above his poll tax, or other obligation.

**5. Every man of his acquaintance**—From this, and more particularly from Chronicles, (verse 5,) it appears that the priests and Levites were not to wait at the temple to receive contributions, but were to "go out unto the cities of Judah, and gather of all Israel money to repair the house of God from year to year." But this method failed, probably because the priests took little interest in the measure, and received little or no more than was sufficient for their own subsistence. The people, too, seemed little inclined to fall in with this measure, for when a new method was adopted, and a chest set by the temple to receive their offerings, they "rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end." 2 Chron. xxiv, 8–10. So in other ages of the

7 \*Then king Jehoshaphat called for Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no *more* money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the breaches of the house. 8 And the priests consented to receive no *more* money of the people, neither to repair the breaches of the house. 9 But Jehoiada the priest took <sup>a</sup> a chest, and bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one cometh into the house of the LORD: and the priests that kept the <sup>e</sup> door put therein all the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD. 10 And it was *so*, when they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's <sup>e</sup> scribe and the high priest came up, and they <sup>7</sup> put up in bags, and told the money *that was* found in the house of the LORD. 11 And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of

them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the LORD: and they <sup>e</sup> laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the LORD. 12 And to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that <sup>a</sup> was laid out for the house to repair *it*. 13 Howbeit <sup>1</sup> there were not made for the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basins, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money *that was* brought into the house of the LORD: 14 But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the LORD. 15 Moreover <sup>a</sup> they reckoned not with the men, into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on workmen: for <sup>1</sup> they dealt faithfully. 16 <sup>m</sup> The trespass money and sin money was not brought into the house of the LORD: "it was the priests'. 17 Then

<sup>o</sup> 2 Chronicles 24. 6. — <sup>k</sup> 2 Chronicles 24. 8, &c. — <sup>5</sup> Hebrew, *threshold*. — <sup>6</sup> Or, *secretary*. — <sup>7</sup> Hebrew, *bound up*. — <sup>8</sup> Hebrew, *brought it forth*.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. *went forth*. — <sup>i</sup> See 2 Chron. 24. 14. — <sup>k</sup> Chap. 22. 7. — <sup>l</sup> Neh. 7. 2; Matt. 24. 45; 1 Cor. 4. 2, 3. — <sup>m</sup> Lev. 5. 15, 18. — <sup>n</sup> Lev. 7. 7; Num. 18. 9.

Church, travelling agents sent forth to collect funds have often cost more than the amounts they collected, and have injured the cause besides.

9. **Jehoiada . . . took a chest** — This, according to 2 Chron. xxiv, 8, was done "at the king's commandment," and was a much more popular measure than the one tried before. It provided that the contributions be audited and used by other persons besides the priests. Their's was the trespass money and sin money, (verse 16,) but the chest was to receive the contributions for the repairing of the temple. "It was expected," says Keil, "that the people would give more, when the collection was appointed for the special purpose of repairing the temple, than when they were to give the legal and voluntary payments only to the priests, whereby no giver knew how much of it might be applied for building." **The priests . . . put therein all the money** — Chronicles, however, seems to show that the people cast their money in the chest with their own hand. It may all have passed through the priests' hands, but so publicly and with such oversight of interested parties as pre-

vented all chance for embezzlement. There is not the slightest evidence that the priests and Levites had been guilty of any dishonesty in former collections, and yet there might have been suspicions.

13. **Not made . . . any vessels of gold** — That is, as is explained in Chronicles, none of the money collected was used for this purpose until all the work of repairing the building was completed. After the repairs were finished the rest of the money was devoted to provide vessels for the house of the Lord. Athaliah had robbed the Lord's house of these vessels to provide for her Baal worship.

15. **Reckoned not with the men** — The men who had charge of the disbursement of the funds were men of such high standing and integrity, and gave such general evidence of having done their work faithfully, that no one desired any special reckoning with them.

16. **Trespass money and sin money** — Money brought to the priests as a trespass offering or a sin offering, according to the law of Levit. v, 15-19 See also Levit. vii, 7, and Num. xviii, 9

\*Hazeal king of Syria went up, and fought against Gath, and took it: and \*Hazeal set his face to go up to Jerusalem. **18** And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own hallowed things, and all the gold *that was found in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and in the king's house, and sent it to Hazeal king of Syria: and he* <sup>10</sup> went away from Jerusalem. **19** And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, *are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?*

*o* Chap. 8. 12.—*p* 2 Chron. 24. 23.—*q* 1 Kings 15. 18; chap. 18. 15, 16.—*10* Heb. *went up*.—*r* Chap. 14. 5; 2 Chron. 24. 25.

**17. Hazeal**—On this man's elevation to the throne of Syria, see chap. viii. 7–15. On his victories over Israel and the eastern tribes, see chap. x. 32, 33. **Fought against Gath**—Having the northern kingdom in subjection, he could easily march his army through its territory and down the western border of Judah to Gath. On the position of Gath, see 1 Sam. v. 8, note. **Set his face to go up to Jerusalem**—Chronicles adds to this, that he did send a company to Jerusalem, and defeated a great host of Israelites, destroyed their princes, and carried off great spoil. The two accounts are brief, and not designed to record all the facts in the case, but they are by no means necessarily contradictory. See 2 Chron. xxiv. 23.

**18. Took all the hallowed things**—This was a too expensive buying of an uncertain peace, and led to no permanent security. Asa before him, (1 Kings xv. 18,) and Ahaz and Hezekiah after him, (chaps. xvi. 8; xviii. 15,) did the like foolish thing, to the great damage of the kingdom.

**20. House of Millo**—The castle or citadel on Zion which David had fortified. 2 Sam. v. 9, note. **Which goeth down to Silla**—"What or where Silla was is entirely matter of conjecture. It must have been in the valley below, overlooked by that part of the citadel which was used as a residence. The situation of the present so-called Pool of Siloam would be appropriate, and

**20** And \*his servants arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew Joash in <sup>11</sup> the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla. **21** For \*Jozachar the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of <sup>12</sup> Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and \*Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

### CHAPTER XIII.

**I**N <sup>1</sup>the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned seventeen years.* **2** And he did

*11* Or, *Bethmillo*.—*s* 2 Chron. 24. 26, *Zabad*.—*12* Or, *Shimrith*.—*t* 2 Chron. 24. 27.—*1* Heb. *the twentieth year and third year*.

the agreement between the two names is tempting; but the likeness exists in the Greek and English versions only. Gesenius, with less than his usual caution, affirms Silla to be a town in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Others refer it to a place on or connected with the causeway, or flight of steps, which led from the central valley of the city up to the court of the temple."—GROVE, in *Smith's Dictionary*.

**21. Buried him with his fathers**—But not, says 2 Chron. xxiv. 25, "in the sepulchres of the kings." For a fuller account of Joash's history, see the parallel history in Chronicles.

### CHAPTER XIII.

REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ, KING OF ISRAEL,  
1–9.

**1. Three and twentieth year**—There is a discrepancy between this verse and verse 10. If Jehoahaz began to reign in the twenty-third, and his son Jehoash in the thirty-seventh year of Joash, king of Judah, Jehoahaz must have reigned, not **seventeen years**, as says this verse, but fourteen, or at most fifteen, years. To meet the difficulty some assume that there is an error in the text, and that we should read *one and twentieth*, or *two and twentieth* year. Others suppose that Jehoahaz associated his son with him as co-regent two or three years before his death. There are no sufficient data to decide the question. Wordsworth

that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and <sup>2</sup> followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom. **3** And <sup>a</sup> the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of <sup>b</sup> Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all their days. **4** And Jehoahaz <sup>c</sup> besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him: for <sup>d</sup> he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. **5** (<sup>e</sup> And the Lord gave Israel a saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, <sup>f</sup> as beforetime. **6** Nevertheless they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, <sup>g</sup> but <sup>h</sup> walked therein: <sup>i</sup> and there <sup>j</sup> remained the grove also in Samaria.) **7** Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots,

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *walked after*.—<sup>a</sup> Judges 2. 14.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 8. 12.—<sup>c</sup> Psa. 78. 34.—<sup>d</sup> Exod. 3. 7; chap. 14. 26.—<sup>e</sup> See verse 25; chap. 14. 25, 27.—<sup>f</sup> Heb. *as yesterday, and third day*.—<sup>g</sup> Heb. *he walked*.

remarks: "In the latter years of the kingdom of Israel the dates of the accession of the sovereigns are fluctuating. This was a natural consequence of the precarious tenure of their rule. It often happened, by reason of the confusion and dissolution of their polity, that it was a matter of doubt whether a king was really king or no at any given time. No wonder, therefore, that the dates are variously given."

**3. All their days**—Rather, *all his days*; literally, *all the days*; that is, all the days of Jehoahaz. Compare verse 22.

**4. Jehoahaz besought the Lord**—The oppression of the Syrian kings humbled his spirit, and led Jehovah to give temporary deliverance: but there was no reformation deep enough to lead to any permanent or great results.

**5. A saviour**—According to verse 22, this saviour could not have saved Israel in the days of Jehoahaz; so it is hardly satisfactory to refer it to some unknown temporary deliverer during the reign of this king. This saviour came not in Jehoahaz's days, but after his death in the person of his son

and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, <sup>a</sup> and had made them like the dust by threshing.

**8** Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, <sup>b</sup> are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?

**9** And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and <sup>c</sup> Joash his son reigned in his stead.

**10** In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah began <sup>d</sup> Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned sixteen years.

**11** And he did *that which was evil in the sight of the Lord*; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: <sup>e</sup> but he walked therein. **12** <sup>f</sup> And the rest of the acts of Joash, and <sup>g</sup> all that he did, and <sup>h</sup> his might wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, <sup>i</sup> are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? **13** And

<sup>f</sup> 1 Kings 16. 33.—<sup>g</sup> Heb. *stood*.—<sup>h</sup> Amos 1. 3.—<sup>i</sup> 6 Verse 10, *Jehoash*.—<sup>j</sup> In consort with his father, chap. 14. 1.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 14. 15.—<sup>l</sup> See verses 14, 25.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 14. 9, &c.; 2 Chron 25. 17, &c.

Jehoash, who, according to verse 25, recovered from the then Syrian king the cities which his father had lost by war. The deliverance was still further secured under Jeroboam, the son of Joash. Compare chap. xiv, 27. Others have supposed, but with little reason, that this *saviour* was an angel, or perhaps Elisha. **Dwelt in their tents**—That is, at peace in their homes, not disturbed by constant rumours of war, and invasion by foreign armies.

**6. The grove**—Rather, *the Asherah*, the great statue erected to this goddess in Samaria. See notes on 1 Kings xiv, 15; xv, 13.

**7. Neither did he leave of the people**—Literally, *for he left not to Jehoahaz a people, except*, etc. The connexion is most natural with verse 4, and verses 5 and 6 are properly put in parenthesis, as in the English version. **Made them like the dust by threshing**—The king of Syria had oppressed and destroyed them almost to annihilation. Perhaps he had actually destroyed many with threshing instruments of iron, as, according to Amos i, 3, he did the inhabitants of Gilead. See also 2 Sam. xii, 31, note

Joash slept with his fathers; and Jehoash sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

14 Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father! 'the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. 15 And Elisha said unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow and arrows. 16 And he said to the king of Israel, <sup>8</sup>Put thine hand upon the bow. And he put his hand upon it: and Eli-

*l* Chap. 2. 12.—8 Heb. *Make thine*

#### REIGN OF JOASH, SON OF JEHOAHAZ, KING OF ISRAEL, 10-13.

The record here given of Joash's reign is very brief, but is supplemented by the account of his visit to the dying prophet Elisha, (verses 14-19,) and his victories over Ben-hadad, (verse 25.) Though he walked too much after the evil examples of his predecessors, his reign was not without some redeeming and commendatory features. His visit to Elisha showed profound reverence for that prophet; and his successful wars against the Syrian oppressor showed him to be a God-sent saviour to Israel, though he failed to accomplish complete deliverance. Verse 5, note. His war with Amaziah is narrated in chap. xiv, 8-15, and 2 Chron. xxv, 17-24. His name is written both *Joash* and *Jehoash*, the former being only a contraction of the latter.

#### SICKNESS, DEATH, AND BURIAL OF ELISHA, 14-21.

14. **Elisha was fallen sick**—The last notice of this prophet was where he sent one of his disciples to anoint Jehu king. Chap. ix, 1-3. During all the bloody period that had intervened he seems to have retired from public affairs. **Joash...came down unto him**—The mortal sickness of this distinguished prophet was soon known throughout the land, and touched the heart of the king. Joash knew that his grandfather Jehu had been anointed by authority from this prophet, and he could not but have the highest reverence for him. **Wept over his face**—That is, wept as he bent over the

sha put his hands upon the king's hands. 17 And he said, Open the window eastward. And he opened *it*. Then Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in <sup>m</sup>Aphek, till thou have consumed *them*. 18 And he said, Take the arrows. And he took *them*. And he said unto the king of Israel, Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed. 19 And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then

*hurd to ride.*—*m* 1 Kings 20. 26.

prostrate form of the man of God as he lay sick upon his couch. **My father! the chariot of Israel**—See note on chap. ii. 12. Joash, by that death-bed, seemed to feel that a power was passing away from Israel mightier than horses and chariots. He had been to Israel better than weapons of war against Syria.

15. **Take bow and arrows**—To make his last oracle more impressive, the prophet uses a memorable symbol.

16. **Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands**—To indicate the approval of the prophet and his God of the war against Syria.

17. **Open the window eastward**—Israel's relation to Syria was now a subject of the greatest concern to both king and prophet, and therefore uppermost in their minds. **The arrow of the Lord's deliverance**—That is, this arrow, shot towards the enemy's country, signifies the deliverance which the Lord will soon grant Israel from the Syrian yoke. The casting of a spear or shooting of an arrow into an enemy's country was a common signal for the beginning of hostilities. Thus Alexander the Great is said to have hurled a dart into his enemy's land when he came to the borders of the Persian territory. **Thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek**—To the symbol he adds a verbal prophecy. At *Aphek* the Syrians had previously suffered defeat. 1 Kings xx, 26-30.

19. **Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times**—And therefore his smiting but three times symbolized that lack of determination and perseverance

hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: "whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice. **20** And Elisha died, and they buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the land

at the coming in of the year. **21** And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man

n Verse

25.

whereby he would fail to overthrow, effectually, the Syrian power.

**20. Buried him**—Josephus says he was honoured with a magnificent funeral, in every respect worthy of a personage so saintly and beloved.

**Bands of the Moabites**—Marauding parties seeking for plunder. The Moabites had partially recovered from the severe losses they suffered at the beginning of Elisha's career. Chap. iii.

**At the coming in of the year**—When the early crops were ripening—appropriate season for a nomadic invasion. Apparently the next year after Elisha's death. This invasion of the Moabites is mentioned to introduce the miracle wrought by the instrumentality of Elisha's bones, recorded in the next verse.

**21. They spied a band of men**—That is, a band of those marauding Moabites just mentioned. The sight of the invaders caused the haste with which they cast the dead man into the wrong sepulchre. **When the man was let down**—Literally, *The man went and touched against the bones of Elisha*. That is, his body was thrust into the tomb, so that it came in contact with the bones of Elisha. "Among the Israelites the dead were neither enclosed in coffins nor covered with earth, but only wrapped in linen cloth and laid in tombs, so that one body might touch another, and, on returning to life, would not be hindered from moving. It was not the dead body of Elisha, but the living God, that gave life again to the dead; and Omnipotence worked by contact with the dead Elisha to show that the Divine efficiency that was in the prophet had not disappeared from Israel with his death. The special object of the miracle was to convince most effectually people and king that the promise of victory over the Syrians was sure, and would come to pass just as the dying Elisha had

announced to king Joash by the laying of his hands upon the hands of the king. The historian intimates this object when, immediately after the account of this miracle, he records the historical fulfillment of that promise. Verses 22–25."—*Keil*.

On the contrast between Elijah and Elisha, see note at the beginning of chap. iv. "It was Elijah," says the son of Sirach, "who was covered with a whirlwind; and Elisha was filled with his spirit; whilst he lived he was not moved by any prince, neither could any bring him into subjection. No word could overcome him, and after his death his body prophesied. He did wonders in his life, and at his death were his works marvellous."

The miracle of Elisha's bones has been the subject both of criticism and of allegory. The rationalist, of course, admits no miracle. In his view the deceased was a person only apparently dead, fallen into a trance, perhaps, but suddenly brought to his senses again by the shock of being roughly cast into Elisha's tomb. Others admit a real miracle, but seem to look upon it with suspicion. "This," says Clarke, "is the first, and, I believe, the last, account of a true miracle performed by the bones of a dead man. And yet on it, and such like, the whole system of miracle-working relics has been founded by the popish Church." "Elisha's works," says Stanley, "stand alone in the Bible in their likeness to the acts of mediæval saints. There alone, in the sacred history, the gulf between biblical and ecclesiastical miracles almost disappears. In this, as in so much besides, his life and miracles are not Jewish but Christian." By others the miracle is made a type of Jesus's power to raise to life by his own death and burial those who are dead in trespasses and sins. "So, too," says Wordsworth, "the apostles and even

\* was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

22 But °Hazeel king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.

23 <sup>p</sup> And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had compassion on them, and <sup>r</sup> had respect unto them, <sup>r</sup> because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his <sup>10</sup> presence as yet. 24 So Hazeel king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son reigned in his stead. 25 And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz <sup>11</sup> took again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazeel the cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war.

9 Heb. *went down*.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 8. 12.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 14. 27.—<sup>q</sup> Exod. 2. 24, 25.—<sup>r</sup> Exod. 32. 13.—<sup>10</sup> Heb. *face*.

gelists being dead yet speak to all the world in the Gospels and Epistles, and by the word of God in them they raise souls to life eternal.”

DELIVERANCE FROM THE SYRIAN OPPRESSION, 22–25.

22. **All the days of Jehoahaz**—So, though the Lord heard the prayer of this king of Israel, he did not answer it by sending a saviour until after his death. See verses 4, 5, notes.

23. **As yet**—There was a tender sympathy which bound Jehovah to the covenant people with whose backslidings he had borne so long, and yet he shows compassion.

24. **Hazeel... died**—This was the beginning of deliverance, for the death of this fierce warrior removed from Israel a source of constant terror. All the evil which Elisha foresaw he would do to Israel (see note on chap. viii, 12) had doubtless been done.

25. **Three times did Joash beat him**—And so proved himself to be a “saviour” to Israel, (verse 5;) but instead of following up his victories to the utter annihilation of the Syrian power, he was content with these three triumphs, and so justified the rebuke, and fulfilled the prophecy, of the dying Elisha. Verse 19. Israel soon fell back into most bitter afflictions and extremity, (chap. xiv, 23,) and another saviour was raised up in Jeroboam the son of Joash. Chap. xiv, 27.

\* Three times did Joash beat him, and recovered the cities of Israel.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

**I**N <sup>a</sup> the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned <sup>b</sup> Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. 2 He was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 3 And he did *that which was right* in the sight of the Lord, yet not like David his father: he did according to all things as Joash his father did. 4 <sup>c</sup> Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high

11 Hebrew, *returned and took*.—<sup>a</sup> Verses 18. 19.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 13. 10.—<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. 25. 1.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 12. 3.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

REIGN OF AMAZIAH, KING OF JUDAH, 1–22.

1. **In the second year of Joash**—Amaziah's father reigned in Jerusalem forty years. Chap. xii, 1. In his thirty-seventh year Joash the son of Jehoahaz began to reign in Samaria. Chap. xiii, 10. Hence it would seem that Amaziah's accession must have taken place in (not the second, but) the third or fourth year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz. To account for this difficulty some adopt the hypothesis of a co-regency, as stated in note on chap. xiii, 1. But this is unnecessary, as the apparent discrepancy may be more easily accounted for by supposing that the first and last years of the forty years' reign of Joash king of Judah were only parts of two years. Thus Keil: “These forty years may have amounted only to thirty-eight and a half or thirty-eight and three quarters, in case that Joash attained to the sovereignty a couple of months before Nisan, and his death occurred a few months after Nisan.”

3. **He did according to all things as Joash**—That is, says Wordsworth, “he began well, and ended ill.” He had the true theocratic spirit, but not a perfect heart. Not only did he fail to remove the high places, but, according to 2 Chronicles xxv, 14, he worshipped and burned incense to the gods of Edom.

places. **5** And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed in his hand, that he slew his servants <sup>a</sup> which had slain the king his father. **■** But the children of the murderers he slew not: according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses,

<sup>d</sup> Chapter 12. 20.—<sup>e</sup> Deuteronomy 24. 16; Ezekiel 18. 4, 20.

**5. Slew his servants**—Jozachar and Jehozabad. See chap. xii. 21. Amaziah was wise to wait till **the kingdom was confirmed in his hand**, and he had all its forces at control. Rawlinson conjectures that the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were, after the days of Jehu, dependencies of the king of Assyria, and when one after another of the Israelitish or Jewish kings came to the throne, he formally applied to the Assyrian monarch to be *confirmed* in his kingdom. This he infers from an Assyrian obelisk which represents Jehu as bringing tribute to the king of Assyria. See note on chap. x. 32.

**6. The children of the murderers he slew not**—In this he evidenced his desire to do right in the sight of God. He allowed judgment and reason to triumph over the passion for vengeance, at the same time that he showed respect for the law of God. **Book of the law of Moses**—The passage referred to is found in Deut. xxiv. 16, and this reference and quotation conclusively prove the existence and authority of the Pentateuch in the time of Amaziah. **Put to death for his own sin**—Personal guilt is neither transmissible nor transferable. Compare marginal references.

**7. Slew of Edom**—The Edomites had cast off the yoke of Judah in the days of Jehoram, (chap. viii. 20,) and had so strengthened themselves that, according to 2 Chron. xxv. 5, 6, Amaziah considered it necessary to lead an army of four hundred thousand men against them. See the parallel passage in Chronicles for a fuller record of this Edomite war. **Valley of salt**—The broad, open plain at the lower end of the Dead Sea, which virtually forms the southern termination of the Ghor, or great Jordan valley. It is appropriately called the *Salt Valley* from the salt

wherein the Lord commanded, saying, <sup>a</sup> The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers: but every man shall be put to death for his own sin. **7** <sup>b</sup> He slew of Edom in <sup>c</sup> the valley of salt ten thousand, and took <sup>d</sup> Selah by

<sup>f</sup> 2 Chron. 25. 11.—<sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. 8. 13; Psa. 60. title.—<sup>h</sup> 1 Or, *The rock*.

mountain at its northwestern extremity, and the brackish springs and streams that are found in it. In this same valley David once smote the Edomites. See note on 2 Sam. viii. 13. **Selah**—More properly written, as in Isa. xvi. 1, *Sela*; Hebrew, סֶלָע, or הַסֶּלָע, *the rock*.

The capital city of the Edomites, situated in Mount Seir, two days' journey south of the Valley of Salt, at the eastern base of Mount Hor. By the Greek writers it is called *Petra*. Strabo and Pliny describe it as a narrow valley, shut in by precipitous rocks and inaccessible mountains, but having a stream running through it fed by copious fountains and supplying water for the irrigation of gardens. After the Mohammedan conquest its site was long unknown, but, discovered A. D. 1812 by Burckhardt, it has since been many times visited and described by travellers. Its site and ruins are represented as among the most wonderful things of the Orient. It is a city whose most imposing remains consist of tombs and temples sculptured in the solid rock. And not the least remarkable thing, according to Robinson, is the colour of the rocks. "They present an endless variety of bright and living hues, from the deepest crimson to the softest pink, verging also sometimes to orange and yellow." The principal entrance to the city is from the east, through a wild, deep chasm, called the Sik, varying in width from twelve to fifty feet. At a point where this chasm takes a sharp turn stands the celebrated structure called the Khazneh, which, says Palmer, "in beauty of form and colouring surpasses all the other tombs and temples. The façade is of a deep but delicate rose colour, and that of the uncut rock around it varies from every shade of red to chocolate." This writer plausi-

war, <sup>h</sup> and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day. <sup>8</sup> Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another in the face. <sup>9</sup> And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, <sup>h</sup> The thistle that *was* in

Lebanon sent to the <sup>1</sup>cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. <sup>10</sup> Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and <sup>m</sup>thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory of *this*, and tarry <sup>2</sup> at home: for why shouldst thou

<sup>h</sup> Joshua 15, 38.—<sup>2</sup> 2 Chronicles 25, 17, 18, &c.  
<sup>k</sup> See Judges 9, 8.—<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings 4, 33.

<sup>m</sup> Deut. 8, 14; 2 Chronicles 32, 25; Ezek. 28, 2, 5, 17; Hab. 2, 4.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *at thy house*.

bly conjectures that it represents "the museum of Petra, the philharmonic institution of the place." The other principal remains are the theatre, the tomb with three rows of columns, the ruined bridges, and the triumphal arch. "In looking at the wonders of this ancient city," writes Robinson, "one is at a loss whether most to admire the wildness of the position and natural scenery, or the taste and skill with which it was fashioned into a secure retreat, and adorned with splendid structures, chiefly for the dead." **Called the**

**name of it Joktheel**—The name signifies *subdued by God*, but does not seem to have been commonly applied to the place for any considerable length of time, for it does not again occur, and Isaiah calls the place by its old name, Sela. Chap. xvi, 1. The phrase **unto this day**, indicates, therefore, that this record of Amaziah's conquest was written during the Jewish rule over Edom, and before the time of Ahaz, when the Edomites had again thrown off the Hebrew yoke. 2 Chron. xxviii, 17.

**8. Let us look one another in the face**—An idiomatic expression used in a hostile sense. Equivalent to, Let us see each other's face by coming into close conflict on a field of battle. The Germans have a similar idiom, *To view heads*, and *to view the whites in the eye*.

In Chronicles we learn the occasion of this war of Amaziah against the kingdom of Israel. The Israelitish soldiers whom Amaziah hired and soon after dismissed were greatly offended at such treatment, and "fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon, and smote three thousand of them, and took much spoil." This was too great an injury for the king of Judah to pass by without notice, and his elation over his Edomite victory,

and the native pride of his heart, urged him on.

**9. The thistle... the cedar**—This answer of Jehoash reminds us of the fable of Jotham. Judges ix, 8. The *thistle* here, like the *bramble* there, represents a low, worthless, and offensive thing, and is a stinging reflection on Amaziah and his kingdom. By the *cedar* the king of Israel pompously suggests to his foe his own magnificence and power, and afterwards plainly says that a war between them must needs result in Judah's downfall. Both the thistle and the cedar are represented as **in Lebanon**, which may have been designed to suggest that a worthless king may sometimes be found in a lofty position, and thence through pride aspire to things beyond his sphere.

**Give thy daughter to my son**—We need not suppose that Amaziah had asked Jehoash to give a daughter in marriage to his son, but it is possible that he had demanded satisfaction for the cities and spoil which the Israelitish soldiers had taken from Judah, or that he had pompously threatened to subdue the kingdom of Israel and unite it again with Judah. **There passed by a wild beast**—Image of an unexpected dispensation of judgment moving forth to the sudden destruction of the haughty schemer. The destroyer is represented as *passing by*, not as sent out by the cedar. So Jehoash might wish to suggest to Amaziah that in case he meddled with things beyond his province he would be suddenly smitten by some judgment of the Almighty. He does not proudly boast and presume to tread down Amaziah and Judah by his own warriors and martial prowess.

**10. Thine heart hath lifted thee up**—The king of Israel, with keen in-

meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee?

**11** But Amaziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another in the face at "Beth shemesh, which *belongeth* to Judah.

**12** And Judah <sup>3</sup> was put to the worse before Israel; and they fled every man to their tents.

**13** And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Bethshemesh, and came to Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from <sup>o</sup> the gate of Ephraim unto <sup>p</sup> the corner gate, four hundred cubits.

**14** And he took all <sup>q</sup> the gold and silver, and all the vessels *that were* found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures

of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria. **15** ' Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? **16** And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead. **17** \* And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. **18** And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? **19** Now <sup>t</sup> they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and he fled to "Lachish; but they sent after

<sup>n</sup> Josh. 19. 38; 21. 16. — <sup>3</sup> Heb. *was smitten*. — <sup>o</sup> Neh. 8. 16; 12. 39. — <sup>p</sup> Jer. 31. 38; Zech. 14. 10.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Kings 7. 51. — <sup>r</sup> Chap. 13. 12. — <sup>s</sup> 2 Chron. 25. 25, &c. — <sup>t</sup> 2 Chron. 25. 27. — <sup>u</sup> Josh. 10. 31.

sight, discerned the real ground of Amaziah's pride and insolence. His recent victory had lifted him up—filled him with pride, and he thought himself unconquerable. **Why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt**—Gesenius renders: *Wherefore shouldest thou contend with calamity*. רָעָה, here rendered

*hurt*, is represented as the foe with whom he *meddles*, or contends. Why, he asks, shouldest thou engage in strife with misfortune?

**11. Amaziah would not hear**—He listened neither to the counsel of Jehoash nor to the prophet whom the Lord sent to advise him, but, according to Chronicles, he *took the advice* of evil-minded persons, who counselled war. **Beth-shemesh**—The modern Ain Shems, fifteen miles southwest of Jerusalem. See notes on Josh. xv, 10 and 1 Sam. vi, 9.

**12. Judah was put to the worse**—יָנַף is better rendered by, *was smitten*, as in the margin. Judah was utterly defeated.

**13. Brake down the wall of Jerusalem**—The northern wall. **Gate of Ephraim**—The same, doubtless, as the gate of Benjamin, (Jer. xxxvii, 13; Zech. xiv, 10,) and so called from being the principal entrance to the city in the direction of these tribes. Its location was probably not far from the modern Damascus gate. Compare Neh. viii, 16;

xii, 39. **Corner gate**—Situated probably at the northwestern corner of the same wall. Compare Jer. xxxi, 38; Zech. xiv, 10. **Four hundred cubits**—About seven hundred feet.

**14. Hostages**—Literally, *sons of security*. These were doubtless prominent men of Judah whom Jehoash demanded for the liberation of Amaziah. Having taken these to secure himself against further trouble with Amaziah he allowed the latter to remain in Jerusalem, where he continued to wear the title of king for fifteen years after the death of his conqueror.

Some have thought that on account of humiliation and repentance Amaziah was specially favoured by God, and spared so long after his defeat, but that Jehoash was suddenly cut off for his sacrilegious spoliation of the temple.

**19. A conspiracy against him**—His turning after the gods of Edom, (see 2 Chron. xxv, 27,) his defeat by Jehoash, the hostages taken of him, and the spoliation of the temple, all served to make the last half of his reign unpopular. The discontent of the kingdom culminated in **conspiracy**. So he perished like his father. Chap. xii, 20. **Lachish**—Probably the modern Um Lâkis, about thirty-five miles southwest of Jerusalem. See on Josh. x, 3. It is chiefly noted in connexion with the siege of Sennacherib. See on chap. xviii, 14; xix, 8.

him to Lachish, and slew him there. **20** And they brought him on horses: and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David. **21** And all the people of Judah took <sup>v</sup> Azariah, which *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. **22** He built <sup>w</sup> Elath, and restored it to Judah, after that the king slept with his fathers.

**23** In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria, and reigned

<sup>v</sup> Chap. 15. 13; 2 Chron. 26. 1, he is called *Uzziah*.—<sup>w</sup> Chap. 16. 6; 2 Chron. 26. 2.—<sup>x</sup> Num. 13. 21; 34. 8.

**20. Brought him on horses**—Hewbrew, *on the horses*; that is, probably, on a chariot drawn by the same horses with which he had fled to Lachish.

**21. Azariah**—Called also *Uzziah*. See note on xv. 1.

**22. Built Elath, and restored it to Judah**—This fragmentary notice of the chief triumph of Judah during Azariah's reign seems to have been thrown in here to show that the son of Amaziah was chiefly distinguished, like his father, for his work in the territories of Edom. *Elath*, which Azariah is here said to have *built*—that is, *repaired* and *fortified*—is first mentioned in connexion with the journey of Israel through the desert, (Deuteronomy ii, 8,) and again at 1 Kings ix, 26, where see note. It was situated at the head of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, and the ancient site is now marked by extensive mounds of rubbish.

REIGN OF JEROBOAM, THE SON OF JOASH, 23–29.

**23. Forty and one years**—This is probably an error, and should be *fifty-two* years. See note on chap. xv. 8.

**24. Departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat**—Fit successor of that first king of Israel, whose name he bore; he was like him both in wickedness and enterprise.

**25. Restored the coast**—Reconquered the territory that had been taken at different times from his predecessors, and made the kingdom as extensive as it was in the days of

forty and one years. **24** And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. **25** He restored the coast of Israel <sup>a</sup> from the entering of Hamath unto <sup>b</sup> the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant <sup>c</sup> Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which *was* of <sup>d</sup> Gath-hepther. **26** For the LORD <sup>e</sup> saw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very bitter: for <sup>f</sup> there was not any shut up,

<sup>y</sup> Deut. 3. 17.—<sup>z</sup> Jonah 1. 1; Matt. 12. 39, *Jonas*.—<sup>a</sup> Josh. 19. 13.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 13. 4.—<sup>c</sup> Deut. 32. 36.

Jeroboam the son of Nebat. **Entering of Hamath**—The northern border of the kingdom of Solomon, (1 Kings viii, 65,) commonly identified with the southern opening into the great valley of Cœle-Syria. See on Josh. xiii, 5. **Sea of the plain**—The Salt or Dead Sea. Compare Deut. iii, 17. **Word of the Lord God**—A communication or oracle granted, notwithstanding the king's wickedness, for the comfort of Israel. **By the hand of . . . Jonah**—That is, through his agency or instrumentality. There can be no reasonable doubt that this **Jonah, the son of Amittai**, is the same prophet whose ministry to the Ninevites is recorded in the prophetic book that bears his name. Josephus says: "Jonah, a prophet, foretold to Jeroboam that he should make war with the Syrians, and conquer their army, and enlarge the bounds of his kingdom on the northern parts to the city of Hamath, and on the southern to the lake Asphaltitis; for the bounds of the Canaanites were originally these, according as Joshua, the general, determined. So Jeroboam organized an expedition against the Syrians, and overran all their country, as Jonah had foretold." **Gath-hepther**—The same as *Githah-hepther*, in the tribe of Zebulun. See on Josh. xix, 13.

**26. Not any shut up, nor any left**—On this idiomatic phrase, see 1 Kings xiv, 10, note. Israel had become reduced to great extremities; the prisoner and the free seemed gone, and thus was fulfilled in them a prophecy

nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. **27** <sup>a</sup>And the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. **28** Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, <sup>c</sup>which belonged to Judah, for Israel, are they not

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 13. 5. — <sup>c</sup> 2 Sam. 8. 6; 1 Kings 11. 24; 2 Chron. 8. 3.

of Moses. Compare Dent. xxxii, 36. **Nor any helper**—No God-sent deliverer, or "saviour," (comp. xiii, 5; xix, 25.) to effectually deliver them from the oppression of the Syrians. Joash had thrice smitten Syria, but as the dying Elisha prophesied, he secured no permanent victory.

**27. The Lord said not**—Not yet had gone forth the oracle of judgment, for still he cared for them in mercy because of his covenant with the ancient fathers. Compare chap. xiii, 23. But there soon came a time when the Divine compassion ceased, and the prophets Hosea, Amos, Micah, and others, foretold the ruin of Israel. **Saved them by the hand of Jeroboam**—Notwithstanding his wickedness and devotion to the calf-worship at Beth-el and Dan, God used him as an instrument to smite the Syrian power.

**28. He recovered Damascus**—David smote the Syrians of Damascus and made them tributary; (2 Sam. viii, 6;) but in Solomon's day Rezon established himself in Damascus and acted the part of an adversary to Israel, (1 Kings xi, 23,) after which time Damascus was not recovered for Israel until the time of this Jeroboam. He brought the kingdom of Damascus, which had so long distressed both Judah and Israel, into subjection, and made it tributary to himself. Afterwards we find Syria and Israel in league against Judah. Chap. xv, 37; xvi, 5. **Hamath, which belonged to Judah**—That is, it belonged to the united kingdom under David and Solomon when the seat of empire was in Judah and Jerusalem. David's conquests, according to 1 Chron. xviii, 3,

written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? **29** And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

## CHAPTER XV.

**I**N the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel <sup>a</sup>began <sup>b</sup>Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 14. 21; 2 Chron. 26. 1, 3, 4. — <sup>b</sup> Verses 13, 30; 2 Chron. 26. 1, *Uzziah*.

extended to Hamath, and Solomon completed the conquest of this district and built store cities there. 2 Chron. viii, 3, 4. But soon afterwards it seems to have recovered its independence. Hamath was one of the oldest cities of Palestine, and is often mentioned in connexion with its northern border. See on Josh. xiii, 5.

## CHAPTER XV.

REIGN OF AZARIAH, [UZZIAH,] KING OF JUDAH, 1-7.

### 1. The twenty and seventh year

—This is probably an error in the text. For if Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years, (chap. xiv, 2,) and outlived Jeroboam's father fifteen years, (chap. xiv, 17,) he must have reigned fourteen years before Jeroboam attained the throne. Hence it appears that **Azariah began...to reign in the fifteenth or sixteenth, instead of the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam.** Some, however, understand that these twenty-seven years of Jeroboam include twelve years of partnership with his father Joash, as expressed in the margin. Others suppose an interregnum of eleven years between Azariah's death and Azariah's succession. But neither of these suppositions are satisfactory. Keil plausibly suggests that the error in the text originated with some ancient copyist, who mistook **יב**, (15,) for **יז**, (27.) The name *Azariah* is variously written *Azariahu*, (Heb., verses 6 and 7;) *Uzziah*, (verses 13 and 30;) *Uzzishu*, (Heb., verse 32.) Some of these changes, if not all, have doubtless arisen, as Gesenius supposes, from the error of copyists. *Uzziah* is the more common form.

to reign. **2** Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. **3** And he did *that which was right* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done; **4** "Save that the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places. **5** And the LORD <sup>a</sup>smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and <sup>d</sup>dwelt in a several house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the house, judging the people of the land. **6** And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? **7** So Azariah slept with his fathers; and <sup>e</sup>they

buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

**8** In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months. **9** And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. **10** And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and <sup>e</sup>smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. **11** And the rest of the acts of Zachariah, behold, they *are* written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel. **12** This *was* <sup>h</sup>the word of the LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons

<sup>c</sup> Verse 35; chap. 12. 3; 14. 4.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. 26. 19-21.—<sup>e</sup> Lev. 13. 46.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Chronicles 26. 23.—<sup>g</sup> Amos 7. 9.  
<sup>h</sup> Chap. 10. 30.

**2. Two and fifty years**—The reign of this king was a most eventful period in Judah and Israel. In his day lived the great prophets Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, Joel, and Jonah; and he lived to see six kings pass from the throne of Israel. The record of this reign is so much more fully given in Chronicles that the reader is referred to the notes there. See on 2 Chron. xxvi.

**5. The Lord smote the king**—For burning incense, and thereby usurping priestly functions. See in Chronicles. **A several house**—Some explain this *a free house*, or *house of liberation*; meaning a house for those who were dismissed from the Lord's service, and so dishonourably *free*; or, according to others, free from the society of men. But Gesenius and Fürst explain it as *a house of sickness*; that is, an infirmary or hospital.

REIGN OF ZACHARIAH, KING OF ISRAEL,  
8-12.

**8 The thirty and eighth year of Azariah**—According to chap. xiv, 23, Jeroboam began to reign in Amaziah's fifteenth year, and as he reigned forty-one years, he must have died in Uzzi-ah's twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh year. Hence there must have been an interregnum in the kingdom of Israel of about eleven years, from the twenty-sixth or twenty-seventh to the thirty

eighth of Uzziah; or else, as is more probable, Jeroboam reigned not forty-one, but fifty-two or fifty-three years. This is further shown by the concurring dates given in verses 13, 17, 23, 27.

**10. Smote him before the people**—That is, openly; before the eyes of all. It would seem that Zachariah's administration was so unpopular as to invite or occasion conspiracy. The Septuagint takes the words rendered *before the people* as a proper name—in *Keblaam*—and Ewald thinks we should disregard the *in*, and understand Keblaam as the name of another conspirator, who sought, like Shallum, to usurp the throne.

**12. The word of the Lord . . . unto Jehu**—See chap. x, 30, note. Keil here remarks how rapidly the kingdom of Israel, after the death of Jeroboam, hastened to its fall. "In sixty-two years from the death of Jeroboam to the conquest of Samaria by Shalmaneser, two anarchies, making up twenty years, prevailed, and six kings followed one another, of whom only one, Menahem, died a natural death, so that his son succeeded him on the throne. The remaining five were dethroned and murdered by rebels, so that, according to the just remark of Witsius, with the murder of Zachariah not only the sentence of Hosea, (chap. i, 4,) 'I will visit the blood of Jezreel upon the house

shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation. And so it came to pass.

**13** Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. **14** For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. **15** And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

z Matt. 1. 8, *Ozias*, and verse 1, *Azariah*.—  
1 Heb. a month of days.—k 1 Kings 14. 17.

of Jehu,' but also the sentence forming a parallel with it, 'and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel,' was carried into effect, inasmuch as with Zachariah the kingdom properly ceased in Israel."

#### SHALLUM'S RULE, 13-15.

**13. Shallum . . . reigned a full month**—Hardly deserving to be called a reign. It was a bold usurpation, and a short and disastrous possession of ill-gotten power.

—**14. Menahem . . . went up from Tirzah**—According to Josephus and most expositors, *Menahem* was the general of Zachariah's army, and had his headquarters at *Tirzah*, the former residence of the kings of Israel, (see note on 1 Kings xiv, 17,) and when he heard of the assassination of the king, he marched immediately with all his forces to Samaria, and slew the usurper Shallum, and took the kingdom into his own hand.

**15. Acts of Shallum . . . in the book of the Chronicles**—Though he ruled but thirty days, the scribes were careful to record his acts and the history of his conspiracy. How ample the records from which our historian drew, but how brief his narrative!

#### REIGN OF MENAHEM, 16-22.

**16. Smote Tiphshah**—Ewald, Thénius, and others, think this must have been a city in Palestine near Tirzah. But in the absence of any mention of city of this name near Tirzah, it is

**16** Then Menahem smote <sup>1</sup> Tiphshah, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened not to him, therefore he smote it; and all the women therein that were with child he ripped up. **17** In the nine and thirtieth year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, and reigned ten years in Samaria. **18** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. **19** And Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thou

z 1 Kings 4. 24.—m Chap. 8. 12.—n 1 Chron. 5. 26; Isa. 9. 1; Hosea 8. 9.

better to understand the border city of Solomon's kingdom, the Thapsacus of the Greeks, mentioned 1 Kings iv, 24, where see note. Wordsworth well remarks: "In the state of confusion in which Israel was at this time, we need not be surprised that a restless and aspiring man, like Menahem, going forth from Tirzah, should have been able to carry his marauding and desolating conquests even to the banks of the Euphrates." **The coasts thereof from Tirzah**—These words do not sufficiently authorize us to maintain that Menahem wasted all the land between Tirzah and Tiphshah, but they clearly show that his conquests were not confined to Tiphshah. We understand that he set out on his expedition from Tirzah, and no doubt many parts of the country between that place and the Euphrates suffered from his march. **Because they opened not**—The inhabitants of Tiphshah offered resistance to Menahem's forces, and this so enraged him that he not only ravished the coasts thereof, but having taken the city, he perpetrated on its inhabitants, even to women and children, the most barbarous cruelties.

**19. Pul . . . came against the land**—Perhaps this king of Assyria had become alarmed at Menahem's successful expedition against Tiphshah, on the Euphrates, on the borders of his own dominion. Or possibly, as Rawlinson thinks, (see note on chap. xiv, 5,) the kingdom of Israel was already in some way dependent on Assyria, and the war

sand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. **20** And Menahem<sup>2</sup> exacted the money of Israel, *even* of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land. **21** And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel? **22** And Menahem slept with his

fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

**23** In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria,<sup>3</sup> *and reigned* two years. **24** And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. **25** But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the

o Chap 14. 5.—2 Heb. *caused*

*to come forth.*—p Job 20. 4, 5.

against Tiphseh was regarded by Pul as an act of rebellion. **Gave Pul a thousand talents**—About seventeen thousand dollars. This present turned the Assyrian foe into an ally, and led him at once **to confirm the kingdom in his hand**, that is, to ratify Menahem's government, and recognise him as the king of Israel.

**20. Turned back**—But according to 1 Chron. v, 26, he carried away with him a number of Israelitish captives.

Pul is the first Assyrian king whose invasion of Israel is mentioned in the Bible, and it is deeply interesting to know that the recently exhumed monuments of the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris throw much light on the biblical history, and often strikingly confirm its statements. But antiquarian research has thus far failed to identify the biblical *Pul* with any king mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions. At one time Rawlinson thought the name might be an abbreviation of *Vul-lush*, but the discovery of the Assyrian Canon showed that three kings reigned between him and Tiglath-pileser, neither of whose names could possibly be represented by *Pul*. Accordingly, says Rawlinson, a high authority on this subject, "the Assyrian records do not merely omit Pul, but exclude him; and we have to inquire how this can be accounted for, and who the biblical Pul is, if he is not a regular and recognised Assyrian monarch."

Some propose to identify him with Tiglath-pileser; others regard him as merely the general of the Assyrian army, but confounded in the Jewish records with the reigning monarch; but

according to the latest views of the writer last quoted, "perhaps the most probable supposition is, that he was a pretender to the Assyrian crown, never acknowledged at Nineveh, but established in the western and southern provinces so firmly, that he could venture to conduct an expedition into Lower Syria, and to claim there the fealty of Assyria's vassals. Or possibly he may have been a Babylonian monarch, who in the troublous times that had now evidently come upon the northern empire, possessed himself of the Euphrates valley, and thence descended upon Syria and Palestine. Berosus represented Pul as a *Chaldean* king, and the name itself, which is wholly alien to the ordinary Assyrian type, has at least one counterpart [*Porus*, in Ptolemy's Canon] among known Babylonian names."—*Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii, p. 123.

REIGN OF PEKAHIAH, 23-26.

**23. The fiftieth year**—According to verse 17 Menahem must have died in the forty-ninth year of Azariah, so that perhaps several months elapsed before his son became the acknowledged king. Perhaps, as Keil suggests, his right to the throne was contested.

**25. Smote him . . . in the palace of the king's house**—Rather, as Gesenius, "*the fortress of the king's house*, the innermost part, as the highest and strongest, *q. d., the citadel*. J. D. Michaelis, and after him most modern interpreters, here translate it *the woman's apartment*, the *harem*; but there is no trace of this in the ancient interpreters, nor is there any reason for departing

king's house, with Argob and Arie, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his room. **26** And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

**27** In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, <sup>a</sup>Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel

*q* Isa. 7. 1. — *r* 1 Chron. 5. 26;

from the simple explanation above given." **With Argob and Arie**—That is, as the Hebrew particle **אֶת** here sufficiently indicates, *Argob and Arie* were slain along with the king. They were probably two important persons of Pekahiah's court, whom Pekah thought it not safe to leave alive after their master's assassination. **With him**—With Pekah. **Fifty men of the Gileadites**—These *men* probably belonged to the royal army, and were under the command of Captain Pekah, and joined with him in the conspiracy.

#### REIGN OF PEKAH, 27-31.

**27. Pekah...twenty years**—According to Bähr we should here read thirty years. Pekah's reign is especially noted for its connexion with Syrian and Assyrian wars. After Tiglath-pileser's first invasion Pekah, and Rezin king of Syria, made a league against Judah, and proposed to reduce Jerusalem, and make a "son of Tabeal" king there in place of Ahaz. Chap. xvi, 5; Isa. vii, 1, 2, 6. This led Ahaz to seek an alliance with Tiglath-pileser, who immediately marched against Damascus, captured the city, and carried its inhabitants into captivity. Chap. xvi, 9.

**29. Tiglath-pileser**—From the various sources of information concerning this Assyrian monarch we learn that he was a usurper, and by a successful revolution became the founder of a new dynasty. He reigned about eighteen years, and was engaged most of the time in wars to recover the losses which the kingdom seems to have suffered through the weakness of his predecessors. His principal campaigns were in Babylonia, Syria, and Palestine. Unfortunately the monuments of this

in Samaria, and reigned twenty years. **28** And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. **29** In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and took <sup>a</sup>Ijon, and Abel-bethmaachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of

Isa. 9. 1. — *s* 1 Kings 15. 20.

king, though numerous, have been wantonly defaced, mutilated, and in many instances destroyed, by his successors, and used to build and adorn later structures. Still they yield much evidence to confirm the Scripture records. Of his league with Ahaz, and his smiting the Syrian power, see chap. xvi, 7, *ff*. **Ijon**—See note on 1 Kings xv, 20. **Abel-bethmaachah**—See note on 2 Sam. xx, 14. **Janoah** is identified by some with the Janohah of the tribe of Ephraim, (see Josh. xvi, 6; ) but as that lies far out of the line of Tiglath-pileser's march, it is more commonly believed that this Janoah must have been in Northern Palestine, and not far from these other cities in connexion with which it is named; but no place of this name has yet been found in that locality. **Kedesh**—See note on Josh. xii, 22. **Hazor**—See note on Josh. xi, 1. **Gilead**—The mountainous region east of the Jordan, (see note on Judg. x, 17,) from which, according to 1 Chron. v, 26, Tiglath-pileser carried away "the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh." **Galilee**—This name, signifying a *circle*, seems to have been originally applied to a circular plain in the vicinity of Kedesh, and in the time of Joshua was limited to the region around that ancient sanctuary of Naphtali. Gradually the name came to indicate a larger region, till at this invasion of Tiglath-pileser it embraced **all the land of Naphtali**, for these words, not being connected by *and* with the preceding, we take to be explanatory of *Galilee*. At a later period *Galilee* became the name of one of the three provinces into which Palestine was divided, and embraced all northern Palestine between Samaria and Syria. Keil regards the enumeration of names

Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. **30** And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and "reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. **31** And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel.

**32** In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of Israel began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign. **33** Five and twenty years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. **34** And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD: he did "according to all that his father Uzziah had done. **35** \*How-

beit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still in the high places. \*He built the higher gate of the house of the LORD.

**36** Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? **37** In those days the LORD began to send against Judah \*Rezin the king of Syria, and "Pekah the son of Remaliah. **38** And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**I**N the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, \*Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. **2** Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he

*†* Lev. 26. 32; Deut. 4. 26, 27.—*u* Chap. 17. 1; Hosea 10. 3, 7, 15.—*v* 2 Chronicles 27. 1.—*w* Verse 3.

*x* Verse 4.—*y* 2 Chron. 27. 3, &c.—*z* Chap. 16. 5; Isa. 7. 1.—*n* Verse 27.—*a* 2 Chronicles 28. 1, &c.

in this verse as "purely historical, that is, following the actual order of the conquests. Tiglath-pileser first took the several partly fortified cities adjacent to the Sea of Merom, then turned to Gilead, conquered this district, and on his return thence the remaining part of Galilee, namely, the whole land of Naphtali." **Carried them captive**

—This was the second Assyrian captivity of any considerable number of Israelites, the first having been under Pul. (1 Chron. v, 26;) but in the reign of the next king, Hoshea, all northern Israel was carried into exile. Chap. xvii, 6.

**30. Twentieth year of Jotham—**

That is, as Usher explains, *the twentieth year after Jotham had begun to reign*; which was, however, the fourth year of Ahaz, for Jotham reigned only sixteen years. The historian dates from the *year of Jotham*, because his son Ahaz has not yet been named in his records. But Bähr regards these words as a "false and late addition." His argument, however, is inconclusive.

REIGN OF JOTHAM, KING OF JUDAH,  
32-38.

**37. In those days—**Evidently near the close of Jotham's reign. **Began to send...Rezin...and Pekah—**That is, the Syro-Israelitish war against Judah only began in Jotham's day.

It belonged rather to the reign of Ahaz. See notes on chap. xvi, 5-9.

The reign of Jotham is more fully detailed in 2 Chron. xxvii, where see notes.

## CHAPTER XVI.

REIGN OF AHAZ, KING OF JUDAH,  
1-20.

"The reign of Ahaz was the most disastrous of any through which Judah had yet passed. The kingdom sank so low, both internally and externally, religiously and politically, that it was on the verge of ruin. Such an incapable ruler had never before ascended the throne. The predominant feature in his character was weakness—weakness of spirit and weakness of intellect. History records nothing about him worthy of respect."—*Bähr*.

**1. Seventeenth year of Pekah—**

As Jotham began to reign in Pekah's second year, and reigned *sixteen* years, (chap. xv, 32, 33,) it would seem that the beginning of the reign of Ahaz should synchronize with Pekah's *eighteenth* or *nineteenth* year. But this apparent discrepancy is explained by supposing the first and last years of Jotham's reign to have been only parts of years. See note on chap. xiv. 1.

**2. Twenty years old...sixteen years—**So his whole age was *thirty-six* years. But he was immediately suc-

began to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that which was right* in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father. **3** But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, <sup>b</sup> and made his son to pass through the fire, according to the <sup>a</sup> abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel.

<sup>b</sup> Lev. 18, 21; 2 Chron. 28, 3; Psalm 106, 37, 38.  
<sup>c</sup> Deut. 12, 31.

ceeded by his son Hezekiah, who was at the time *twenty-five years* old. Chap. xviii. 2. Accordingly Ahaz must have begotten his son Hezekiah when he was only eleven years old. To meet this difficulty some copies of the Septuagint, and the Syriac and Arabic versions at the parallel place in Chronicles, (xxviii, 1,) read *twenty-five* instead of *twenty years*. But most interpreters accept the common reading, and argue that it was nowise impossible for Ahaz to beget a son in his eleventh or twelfth year. Compare note on chap. xviii, 2.

**3. Walked in the way of the kings of Israel**—By running into all sorts of idolatry, and forming leagues with the heathen. His reign was a period of enormous wickedness, and to Judah one of numerous disasters. **Made his son to pass through the fire**—This expression, more fully written in chap. xxiii, 10, *to pass through the fire to Molech*, is interpreted by the rabbies to mean merely the passing between two burning pyres as a purificatory rite. But this is refuted by the parallel passage in 2 Chron. xxviii, 3: *He burnt his children in the fire*, and also by the unequivocal statements of the following texts: Psal. cvi, 37, 38; Jer. vii, 31; xix, 4, 5; Ezek. xvi, 20, 21; xxiii, 37. A comparison of all these passages will show that the victims were slain before they were burned. The laws of Moses warned the Israelites against this very **abomination**. Compare Lev. xviii, 21; xx, 2-4; Deut. xviii, 10. The rabbinical theory evidently sprung from a desire to escape the charge of the atrocious idolatries of the ancient Jews. **Abominations of the heathen**—Several of the Canaanitish nations, as well as the Ammorites and Moabites, appear to have practised this horrible rite.

**4** And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and <sup>a</sup> on the hills, and under every green tree. **5** <sup>e</sup> Then Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war: and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him. **6** At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave

<sup>d</sup> Deut. 12, 2; 1 Kings 14, 23.—<sup>e</sup> Isa 7 1, 4. &c.  
<sup>f</sup> Chap. 14, 22.

According to Movers, "the burning of the children was regarded as a passing through, by which they attained to purification with the deity after the dissolution of the earthly, impure dross of the body."

**4. High places...hills...every green tree**—Compare Hosea iv, 13. To all this Chronicles adds that he "made molten images for Baalim."

**5. Rezin...and Pekah...came up**—In the days of Jotham they had formed an alliance and commenced operations against the kingdom of Judah, but for some reason they seem not to have **come up to Jerusalem** until the beginning of Ahaz's reign. Perhaps Jotham's soldier-like power and valour were more than a match for the allied armies. **Besieged Ahaz**—His weakness and wickedness emboldened his foes. **Could not overcome**—The army of Jerusalem seems to have been inspired by Isaiah's words, who came forward at this season of alarm, and uttered the oracle of doom against "the two tails of these smoking firebrands, Rezin and the son of Remaliah." Compare Isa. vii, 1-9.

But though unable to capture Jerusalem, they did immense injury to the kingdom of Judah. According to 2 Chron. xxviii, 5-15, they either slew or carried into exile hundreds of thousands of the people, and also took much spoil. The Israelites, however, at the exhortation of the prophet Obed, released their captives and sent them back to Jericho.

**6. At that time**—During the course of this Syro-Israelitish war. **Rezin...recovered Elath to Syria**—Rezin appears throughout all this war against Judah as more powerful than his Israelitish ally. *Elath*, on the Red Sea, had

the Jews from <sup>1</sup>Elath: and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day. **7** So Ahaz sent messengers <sup>2</sup>to <sup>2</sup>Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, *I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise*

up against me. **8** And Ahaz <sup>3</sup>took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent *it for a present* to the king of Assyria. **9** And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against <sup>4</sup>Damascus, and <sup>5</sup>took it, and

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *Eloth*.—<sup>2</sup> Chap. 15. 29.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *Tilgath-pileser*, 1 Chron. 5. 26; 2 Chron. 28. 20,

*Tilgath-pileser*.—<sup>3</sup> Chap. 13. 18; 2 Chron. 28. 21.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *Dammeseck*.—<sup>4</sup> Amos 1. 5.

been taken from the Edomites and attached to the kingdom of Judah in the reign of Uzziah. See on chap. xiv, 22.

The word *recovered* [הָשִׁיב] does not

necessarily imply that Elath had formerly belonged to Syria, but here it simply means that it now *changed hands*, turned from one possessor to another. **The Syrians came to Elath**—The Hebrew is without the article, *Syrians came*—that is, a colony of Syrians. Rezin, having captured this ancient commercial town, at once settled a Syrian colony there, probably for purposes of commerce, and to open for himself a new source of revenue, and though Syria was soon afterwards conquered, and Rezin slain, this colony **dwelt there unto this day**, that is, at the time when our author wrote. For it is by no means improbable that a Syrian colony remained at Elath long after the home Government had been annihilated. The Keri, Septuagint, Vulgate, and many interpreters, read *Edomites* instead of *Syrians*, but that reading would seem to be unsuitable, for it would be strange to say that Edomites *dwelt there unto this day*, when the Edomites had al-

ways dwelt in that vicinity. Besides the losses which Ahaz sustained from the combined armies of Rezin and Pekah, Chronicles informs us that the Edomites and Philistines also invaded Judah on the south and west, occupied many cities, and carried off captives. 2 Chron. xxviii, 17, 18.

**7. Ahaz sent . . . to Tiglath-pileser**

—He placed no strong reliance on the word of the Lord by Isaiah that Rezin and Pekah were only like two smoking firebrands that would soon burn out and be harmless. He was probably led to apply to the Assyrian monarch because he had already greatly injured Israel. See note on chap. xv, 29. **Thy servant and thy son**—An acknowledgment of Judah's dependency on Assyria. Compare note on chap. xiv, 5.

**8. Ahaz took the silver and gold**

—He did to the king of Assyria what Jehoash had done for a like purpose to the king of Syria. See chap. xii, 18.

**9. Went up against Damascus**—

Which was the "head," or capital of Syria. See Isa. vii, 8. **Took it**—Captured the city. **Kir**—This place is mentioned again at Isa. xxii, 6; Amos i, 5; ix, 7; but it does not appear from



Final Assault of Damascus. From the Assyrian Monuments.

carried *the people* of it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin. **10** And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.

*2 Chron.*

any of these notices whether it was a city or a district, and its locality is unknown. Some think a trace of the name still lingers in the river *Kur*, which rises in the mountains of Caucasus and flows into the Caspian Sea. But this seems too far north, and it is doubtful whether that region ever belonged to Assyria. **Slew Rezin**—This defeat crushed for centuries the pros-

**11** And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made *it* against king Ahaz came from Damascus. **12** And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and <sup>\*</sup>the king approached to the altar, and offered

26. 16. 19.

perity and independence of Damascus, and utterly destroyed the kingdom of Syria. A mutilated inscription now in the British Museum contains a notice of the defeat and death of this last of the Syrian kings; and among the sculptures lately discovered at Nineveh is one that is thought to be a representation of the final siege of Damascus and the captivity of its inhabitants.



Captivity of the Inhabitants. From the Assyrian Monuments.

**10. Went to Damascus**—After its capture. **To meet Tiglath-pileser**—To pay him a visit of homage and submission. **Saw an altar**—Before going to Damascus, and before the fall of the Syrian kingdom, and while he was hard pressed by the forces of Rezin, "he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him: and he said, Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them, that they may help me." *2 Chron. xxviii. 23.* Now, however, he proposes to worship the more triumphant gods of Assyria, whose altar, after the victory of Tiglath, had been set up at Damascus. "It has been generally supposed," says Rawlinson, (*Historical Evidences*, p.117.) "that this altar was Syrian; and its establishment has been connected with

the passage in Chronicles, where Ahaz is said to have 'sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, which smote him;' but few things can be more improbable than the adoption of the gods of a foreign nation at the moment when they had been proved to be powerless. The strange altar of Ahaz was in all probability not Syrian, but Assyrian; and its erection was in accordance with an Assyrian custom, of which the inscriptions afford abundant evidence—the custom of requiring from the subject nations some formal acknowledgment of the gods and worship of the sovereign country." It would seem that about this time the astral worship of Assyria was introduced into the kingdoms both of Judah and Israel. See on chap. xvii. 16.

**12. Saw the altar**—That is, the *new*

thereon. **13** And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of 'his peace offerings, upon the altar. **14** And he brought also 'the brazen altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar. **15** And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn <sup>m</sup> the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with

the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brazen altar shall be for me to inquire *by*. **16** Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded. **17** "And king Ahaz cut off <sup>o</sup> the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down <sup>p</sup> the sea from off the brazen oxen that *were* under it, and put it upon a pavement of stones. **18** And the covert for the sabbath that they had

4 Heb. *which were his*.—<sup>i</sup> 2 Chron. 4. 1.  
<sup>m</sup> Exod. 29. 39-41.

<sup>n</sup> 2 Chron. 28. 24.—<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings 7. 27, 28.  
<sup>p</sup> 1 Kings 7. 23, 25.

altar which Urijah had just completed, according to the pattern sent him from Damascus, and had erected, apparently, near the entrance into the court. This new altar is called emphatically *the altar* in this verse and the following, and in verse 15, *the great altar*.

**14. The brazen altar**—This stood in the midst of the inner court, the court of the priests. See cut, page 68. It was, according to 2 Chron. iv, 1, twenty cubits square and ten cubits high. Its position is described as **before the Lord**, that is, in front of the holy place. **Brought... from the forefront of the house**—Moved from its old sacred place in front of the temple, and placed, as the sequel shows, nearer to the north side of the court, so as not to stand **between the (new) altar and the house of the Lord**. In the spot where Urijah had placed it, the new altar was not properly *before the Lord*, inasmuch as the brazen altar stood between it and the holy place. So the king changed the position of both altars, placing the new one nearer to the temple, and the brazen altar **on the north side of it**. He would not have the new altar occupy a secondary place. So, says Wordsworth, "the new altar became the principal central object, and the brazen altar was only an adjunct and appendage to it"

**15. Upon the great altar**—The new altar thus supplanted the ancient altar of Jehovah, and became *the great altar*, that is, the chief or principal altar; on which all the customary offerings of the

temple were thenceforth to be offered as long as Ahaz ruled. **The brazen altar shall be for me to inquire by**—Better, with Gesenius, Keil, Fürst, and Bähr, to take בִּיקֵר here, not in the sense of *inquiring or searching by*, as an oracle, but, *to consider, to weigh in one's mind*. Ahaz ordered the priest to offer all the offerings on the new altar, but reserved the disposal of the brazen altar for further consideration.

**16. Thus did Urijah**—And because of his sacrilegious obedience to Ahaz, some think his name was not allowed in the list of priests given at 1 Chron. vi, 3-15. What a contrast to the bold and faithful Azariah, who withstood the king when he attempted sacrilege. 2 Chron. xxvi, 17, 18.

**17. Borders of the bases...laver...sea...brazen oxen**—See notes and cuts at 1 Kings vii, 23-39. On his object in removing these precious things, see next verse. **A pavement of stones**—A structure or pedestal made of stones; less costly and attractive than the brazen oxen.

**18. The covert for the sabbath**—Keil renders, *the covered sabbath stand*, and explains it with probable correctness as some "covered place, stand, or hall in the court of the temple, to be used by the king whenever he visited the temple with his retinue on the sabbath, or on feast days." Such a *covert* would naturally be furnished and ornamented with many precious things, and would be an evidence of wealth. **That**

built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord for the king of Assyria. **19** Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?* **20** And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and <sup>a</sup>was buried with his fathers in the city of David:

*a* 2 Chron. 28, 27.

**they had built**—A kind of impersonal expression, equivalent to *which had been built*. **The king's entry without**—Probably the magnificent ascent from the palace to the temple, which, in the days of Solomon, had so overwhelmed the queen of Sheba. 1 Kings x, 5. **Turned he from the house of the Lord**—That is, he *turned* them aside from the purposes for which they were built; he *changed* them, perhaps to other uses. He *changed* them, as he did the bases, and the laver, and the brazen oxen, by removing them from sight, or else taking away all their costly adornings. **For the king of Assyria**—Rather, *from the king of Assyria*, or *from fear of the king*, as Bähr explains, referring for this use of the word מִפְּנֵי

to Gen. vii, 7; Judges ix, 21; Isa. xx, 6, and other passages. Some understand that Ahaz removed all these sacred things from the temple for the purpose of presenting them to the king of Assyria; but chap. xxv, 16, and Jer. lii, 20, show that some of them were in Jerusalem at the time of the Babylonian conquest. Ahaz removed them, not as a present *for* the king of Assyria, but to hide them *from* the king. He desired to hide from the covetous Assyrian monarch these evidences of wealth, and so removed them from their sacred places. Some are of opinion that under the reformation of Hezekiah or of Josiah they were restored to their places again.

This effort of King Ahaz to conceal his treasures from Tiglath-pileser only confirms the statement made, 2 Chron. xxviii, 20, that his alliance with the Assyrian king "strengthened him not"—was no permanent assistance, but rather a curse, for it "distressed him," and left him a dishonoured vassal of a ~~cat~~ heathen power.

and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead.

## CHAPTER XVII.

**I**N the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah began <sup>a</sup>Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years. **2** And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were

*a* Chap. 15, 30.

## CHAPTER XVII.

REIGN OF HOSHEA AND FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL, 1-23.

### 1. In the twelfth year of Ahaz—

In our note on chap. xv, 30, following Usher we understand that Hoshea slew Pekah in the fourth year of Ahaz. Accordingly there must have been an interregnum of about eight years after Pekah's death before Hoshea succeeded in seating himself on the throne. This opinion is adopted by Keil, who says, "His possession of the throne must have been contested for eight years. The earlier commentators, and almost all the chronologists, have justly assumed that there was an eight years' anarchy between the death of Pekah and the commencement of Hoshea's reign. This assumption merits the preference, above all the attempts made to remove the discrepancy by alterations of the text, since there is nothing at all surprising in the existence of anarchy at a time when the kingdom was in a state of the greatest inward disturbance and decay." This seems to us more satisfactory than Bähr's proposal to alter the text in chapter xv. 27 by reading thirty instead of twenty years for Pekah's reign, and to regard the latter part of chap. xv, 30 as an interpolation.

**2. Not as the kings of Israel that were before him**—"It looks," says Ewald, "like the bitter irony of fate that this Hoshea, who was to be the last king, was a better one than any of his predecessors. The words of the true prophets who had uttered so many and such important truths concerning this kingdom during the last fifty years, may, perhaps, have exercised a powerful influence over him, and instilled into him better principles. But they

before him. **3** Against him came up <sup>b</sup>Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea became his servant, and <sup>1</sup>gave him **2**presents. **4** And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had

sent messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. **5** Then

*b* Chap. 18. 9.—1 Heb. *rendered*.

2 Samuel 8. 2.—2 Or, *tribute*.

had always predicted its fall as certain; and now the irresistible force of history was to prove that no single man, whatever might be his position and superiority, could be strong enough to delay the ruin of the whole structure, if the right moment for its reformation had passed."

**3. Shalmaneser**—This Assyrian king and warrior seems to have been the regular and undisputed successor of Tiglath-pileser, and was therefore, probably, his son. The monuments bearing his records have been so mutilated by his successors that they shed very little light on his history. Josephus states, on the authority of Menander, that the name of this king was inscribed in the archives of Tyre, and that during the reign of one Eluleus he overran all Phenicia. But after his departure old Tyre rebelled, and the king of Assyria returned, and warred for five years against the city; but though he was assisted by many Phenicians, the Tyrians were more than a match for him, and his siege was unsuccessful. These wars with Phenicia were probably contemporaneous with those against Samaria. **Hoshea became his servant**—Became a vassal king, rendering **presents**, or *tribute*, to Shalmaneser as the great king. Some think that Hoshea had refused or neglected to pay tribute to Assyria, and this was the reason of Shalmaneser's invasion; others think that this *coming up* of the Assyrian king was merely an expedition of conquest, growing out of the ambition of the new sovereign, and not from any provocation of Hoshea.

**4. Found conspiracy in Hoshea**—This, of course, was after the first invasion. Ewald thinks this conspiracy of Hoshea was prompted by the successful rebellion of Tyre. "It was now seen to be possible for the Assyrians to be beaten; and when a few years had passed, it was thought that a

favourable opportunity had arrived for concluding an offensive and defensive alliance against the Assyrians with the Egyptian king Seveh; for the Ethiopic dynasty, which was then ruling in Egypt, appeared to be the only power which could successfully maintain a contest against them by land." **So king of Egypt**—The Masoretic pointing would make **So** the correct pronunciation, but it would seem better to write the name, **סד**, as Ewald does, *Seveh*. It is settled that this king belonged to the twenty-fifth dynasty, but whether he was the first or second king of this dynasty is not clear. He was very probably the same king whom Herodotus (ii, 137) calls "Sabakon, king of the Ethiopians," who, during the reign of a blind king, Amyris, "invaded Egypt with a large force, and reigned for fifty years." He is called Shebek on the monuments. "The appearance of this great conqueror on the scene," says Sumner, in Schaff's Lange, "infused hope into the small nations of Western Asia that they might be able, at least, to change masters; that this new Egyptian power might form a counterpoise to the Assyrian; and that his power might be found to be milder." Perhaps it was owing to some assistance rendered by this Egyptian sovereign that Samaria was enabled to sustain so long a siege. See on verse 6. **Shut him up. . . in prison**—The order of verses would indicate that this capture and imprisonment of Hoshea was before the siege of Samaria, and so many interpreters believe. Rawlinson thinks there was an interval of a year or two between the imprisonment of Hoshea and the expedition mentioned in the next verse. But it is very common with the Hebrew writers to record the result of an expedition before the details are told; and as verse 6 implies that Hoshea was king when Samaria was taken, and verse 1 declares that

'the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years.

c Chapter 18. 9. —d Chapter 18. 10, 11;  
Hosea 13. 16.

he reigned in Samaria nine years, we adopt the opinion that his imprisonment was subsequent to the capture of Samaria, and when he was no longer king.

5. **Came up throughout all the land**—He overran all the country, subduing all the smaller towns, apparently as a measure preliminary to the

6 'In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and

e Lev. 26. 32, 33; Deut. 28. 36, 64; 29. 27, 28.  
f 1 Chron. 5. 26.

final siege of the capital. **Besieged it three years**—The length of this siege evidences the strength of Samaria, and the desperate resistance of its people. "It is remarkable," says Ewald, "how strong a resemblance the fall of Samaria bears to the first and second destructions of Jerusalem, in the heroic resistance of its inhabitants." The



Evacuation of a Captured City. From the Assyrian Monuments.

horrors of this siege may be inferred from Isa. xxviii, 1-4; Hosea x, 14; xiii, 16; Amos vi, 9-14.

6. **The king of Assyria took Samaria**—From the context we most naturally infer that this Assyrian king was no other than Shalmaneser, mentioned in verse 3, but the Assyrian inscriptions show that it was Shalmaneser's successor, whose name, Sargon, occurs in Isa. xx, 1. This fact by no means conflicts with our historian, who simply calls the conqueror **the king of Assyria**. Compare chap. xviii, 10.

a long inscription discovered in the palace of Khorsabad, and commonly called the "Acts of Sargon," occurs the following: "I besieged, took, and occupied the city of Samaria, and carried into captivity twenty-seven thousand two hundred and eighty of its inhabitants. I changed the former government of the country and placed over it lieutenants of my own. . . . And Sebeh, ruler of Egypt, came to Raphia [a city near the seacoast southwest of Gaza] to fight against me; they met me

and I routed them; Sebeh fled." This last statement gives support to the conjecture that it was some interference from the king of Egypt that enabled Samaria to hold out so long against the Assyrian armies. Compare note on verse 4. Sargon seems, therefore, to have been a usurper who gained possession of the throne of Assyria during Shalmaneser's prolonged absence at the siege of Samaria. "In the East," says Rawlinson, "it is always dangerous for the reigning prince to be long away from his metropolis. In the king's absence all languishes; the course of justice is suspended; public works are stopped; workmen are discharged; wages fall; and the people, anxious for better times, are ready to welcome any pretender who will come forward and declare the throne vacant, and claim to be its proper occupant. If Shalmaneser continued to direct in person the siege of Samaria three years, we cannot be surprised that the patience of the Ninevites was exhausted, and that in the third year they accept-

placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 7 For so it was, that the

children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from

ed the rule of the usurper who boldly proclaimed himself king." So the siege of Samaria was commenced and long carried on by Shalmaneser, but was completed by Sargon, who subsequently warred against Hamath and Egypt, as his inscription claims. But the Hebrew historian does not concern himself with this dynastic revolution, as it in no way changed the attitude of Assyria towards Israel. **Halah**—The exact locality of *Halah* is not settled, and whether it were a city or a district is doubtful. The most probable supposition is, that it was a district lying on or near the river of Gozan, and probably near its source. **Habor** is usually identified with the modern Khabur, which rises in Mount Masius, and flows in a nearly southerly direction, and empties into the Euphrates at the site of the ancient Carchemish. According to Benjamin of Tudela there were large communities of Israelites as late as the twelfth century living on the banks of this river. Many think this river identical with the *Chebar* of Ezekiel. Chap. i, 1. Others, however, identify the *Habor* with a river of similar name which empties into the Tigris some seventy miles above Nineveh. In this verse the river of Gozan seems to be in apposition with *Habor*, and J. L. Porter suggests that *Habor* is the name of the district watered by the lower Khabur, while the upper part of the same river, flowing through the province of Gozan, is called the river of Gozan. In 1 Chronicles v, 26, the river of Gozan is distinguished from *Habor*, which would be natural enough if different names were applied to different portions of the same river. Ptolemy mentions a province on the southern declivities of Mount Masius called *Gausanitis*, and it was probably identical with the ancient Gozan. At the time of Sargon all this region must have belonged to the Assyrian empire. **Cities of the Medes**—So all the captives were not placed along the Habor, but some transported into the more distant

Media. One of the Median cities, to which exiles were taken, appears from Tobit i, 14, to have been Rages. It is interesting to note that in his long inscription, already mentioned, Sargon claims to have subjected Media to his sway. "Sargon seems to have been the first Assyrian monarch who conquered Media; and he expressly relates that, in order to complete its subjection, he founded there a number of cities, which he planted with colonists from other portions of his dominion." —RAWLINSON, *Hist. Eviden.*, p. 119. It seems to have been a favourite policy of his to colonize newly-conquered districts by placing in them people from a distance, and forming a mixed population which would not be so likely to plan revolt or treason. Comp. verse 24.

7. For so it was, that—Rather, and it came to pass when. Compare the use of *וַיְהִי כֵן*, in Gen. vi, 1; xxvi, 8; xxvii, 1; xlv, 24. From this verse on through verse 17 the historian gives the theocratic view of Israel's downfall. The apodosis, giving the consequences of Israel's sins, follows in verses 18–23. So momentous a catastrophe was the fall of the kingdom of Israel, that the historian pauses in the midst of his narrative to dwell at length upon its moral aspects. **Which had brought them up out of . . . Egypt**—"The deliverance from Egypt was really the selection of Israel to be God's peculiar and covenant people. Exod. xix, 4–6. It was not only the beginning, but also the symbol, of all Divine grace towards Israel, the pledge of its Divine guidance. It therefore stands at the head of the covenant, or organic law, (Exod. xx, 2, Deut. v, 6,) and it is always cited as the chief and fundamental act of the Divine favour. Levit. xi, 45; Joshua xxiv, 17; 1 Kings viii, 51; Psal. lxxxi, 10; Jer. ii, 6. Therefore this author also makes it the stand-point for his review and criticism of the history. He means to say thereby: "Although no people on earth had experienced such favour from Almighty God as Israel had, nevertheless it aban-

under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, **8** And <sup>a</sup>walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. **9** And the children of Israel did secretly *those things that were* not right against the Lord their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, <sup>b</sup>from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. **10** <sup>c</sup>And they set them up <sup>d</sup>images and <sup>e</sup>groves <sup>f</sup>in every high hill, and under every green tree: **11** And there they burnt incense in all the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger: **12** For they served idols, <sup>g</sup>whereof the Lord had said unto

<sup>g</sup> Lev. 18. 3; Deut. 18. 9; chap. 16. 3.—<sup>h</sup> Chap. 18. 8.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Kings 14. 23; Isa. 57. 5.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *statutes*.—<sup>k</sup> Exod. 34. 13; Deut. 16. 21; Micah 5. 14.—<sup>l</sup> Deut. 12. 2; chap. 16. 4.—<sup>m</sup> Exod. 20. 3, 4; Lev. 26. 1; Deut. 5. 7, 8.

done this God and served other gods.” —*Bähr*. **Feared other gods**—See the fuller statement of verse 16.

**8. Walked in the statutes**—Observed the religious customs and ordinances. **Whom the Lord cast out**—To adopt the religions and worship of peoples whom Jehovah had so signally defeated and cast out from the Land of Promise was the height of idolatrous infatuation. **Of the kings of Israel, which they had made**—That is, in addition to walking *in the statutes of the heathen* they also observed statutes of their kings, that is, religious ordinances which their kings had made. The allusion is to the calf worship established at Beth-el and at Dan. See 1 Kings xii, 26, 27, notes.

**9. Did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord**—Literally, *covered things* (or words, *דברים*) which are not right upon Jehovah. The general idea is, that they distorted his worship, and sacrilegiously changed his ordinances. Keil translates and explains thus: “*They covered words which were not right concerning Jehovah their God*; that is, they sought to conceal the true nature of Jehovah by arbitrary perversions of the word of God. This covering of words over Jehovah showed itself in the fact that

them, <sup>a</sup>Ye shall not do this thing. **13** Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, <sup>b</sup>by all the prophets, and *by* all <sup>c</sup>the seers, saying, <sup>d</sup>Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments and my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. **14** Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but <sup>e</sup>hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God. **15** And they rejected his statutes, <sup>f</sup>and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed <sup>g</sup>vanity, and <sup>h</sup>became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the Lord

<sup>n</sup> Deut. 4. 19.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *by the hand of all*.—<sup>o</sup> 1 Sam. 9. 9.—<sup>p</sup> Jer. 18. 11; 25. 5; 35. 15.—<sup>q</sup> Deut. 31. 27; Prov. 29. 1.—<sup>r</sup> Deut. 29. 25.—<sup>s</sup> Deut. 32. 21; 1 Kings 16. 13; 1 Cor. 8. 4.—<sup>t</sup> Psa. 115. 8; Rom. 1. 21.

they built altars on high places, and by worshipping God in ways of their own invention concealed the nature of the revealed God, and made Jehovah like the idols.” Similarly *Bähr*: “*They covered Jehovah with things which were not right*; that is, they concealed him by them so that he could no longer be seen and recognised; which is as much as to say that they practically denied and ignored him.” **High places**—Compare note on 1 Kings iii, 2. **Tower of the watchmen**—A tower built in the desert or in lonely places for the convenience of shepherds and the protection of flocks. Compare 2 Chron. xxvi, 10. Here and in chap. xviii, 8 it is named in antithesis to the thickly populated and fortified towns.

**10. Images...groves**—See note on 1 Kings xiv, 15, 23.

**13. By all the prophets, and by all the seers**—Prophets of every kind had been sent to warn them. Besides many of less note, there were Elisha, Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah, who uttered memorable warnings and admonitions for Israel.

**15. Followed vanity, and became vain**—Compare Jer. ii, 5; Rom. i, 21. The idol is from the theocratic standpoint a *nothing*, (*הֶבֶל*, a breath,) compare 1 Cor. viii, 4; and therefore devo-

had charged them, that they should <sup>not</sup> do like them. **16** And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and <sup>made</sup> them molten images, <sup>even</sup> two calves, <sup>and</sup> made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, <sup>and</sup> served Baal. **17** <sup>And</sup> they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and <sup>used</sup> divination

and enchantments, and <sup>sold</sup> themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger. **18** Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left <sup>but</sup> the tribe of Judah only. **19** Also <sup>Judah</sup> kept not the commandments of the Lord their God, but walked in the statutes of Is-

*u* Deut. 12. 30, 31.—*v* Exod. 32. 8; 1 Kings 12. 28.—*w* 1 Kings 14. 15, 23; 15. 13; 16. 33.—*x* 1 Kings 16. 31; 22. 53; chap. 11. 18.

*y* Lev. 18. 21; chap. 16. 3; Ezek. 23. 37.—*z* Deut. 18. 10.—*a* 1 Kings 21. 20.—*b* 1 Kings 11. 13, 32.—*c* Jer. 3. 8.

tion to idols can lead only to emptiness—utter spiritual worthlessness.

**16. Two calves**—See at 1 Kings xii, 28. **Grove**—See note on 1 Kings xiv, 15. **Worshipped all the host of heaven**—In our note on chap. xvi, 10 we observed that the Assyrian astral worship was probably introduced into the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the times of Pekah and Ahaz, and chaps. xxi, 3 and xxiii, 5, 11 show that it was common in Judah in the times of Manasseh and Ammon. But long anterior to this it may have been introduced in connexion with the Baal and Ashtoreth worship of Phenicia, for Ashtoreth was not without a sidereal character. "It is not by any means easy," says Wilkins, (*Phenicia and Israel*, p. 171,) "to determine the exact form which the worship of the heavenly bodies took in the various nations of Western Asia. The purest form of star worship was that of the Assyrio-Persian magism; it admitted of no images of the deity, and in its adoration of the heavenly bodies it drew its deepest inspiration from the thought of their perfect beauty. This was the *cultus* to which Job (xxxi, 26) felt himself tempted when he 'beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness.' Compare Deut. iv, 19. A second mode of regarding the stars was that of the Phenicians, by whom they were looked upon as the originators of the growth and decay of nature—the embodiment of the creative and generative principle; and from this view there was readily developed a further symbolism, which led ere long to the grossest idolatry. The third great system of astral worship was that whose leading tendency was to dwell rather on the con-

templation of the eternal unchangeableness of the heavenly bodies, as contrasted with the chances and changes of this transitory life. This was the form most common among the Chaldeans, and naturally produced the astrology for which they were famous. It is not always possible to determine which form of the worship of *the host of heaven* was that which presented itself as a temptation to the children of Israel; on the whole, we may assume it to have been the second, not only from the connexion in which it is mentioned, but also from the circumstances of the case." **Served Baal**—See note on 1 Kings xvi, 31.

**17. Pass through the fire**—See at chap. xvi, 3. **Used divination and enchantments**—No record of this appears in the previous history of the ten tribes, but abundant evidence in the allusions of contemporary prophets. Sc Isa. ii, 6; viii, 19; xix, 3; xlvii, 13; Hos. iv, 12; Micah iii, 7. **Sold themselves**—Voluntarily made themselves slaves to all the above-mentioned forms of wickedness.

**18. Therefore**—In view of all the sins mentioned in verses 7–17. See note on verse 7. **Removed them out of his sight**—"That is, out of the Holy Land where Jehovah had his dwelling; out of the land of the covenant and out of the land of revelation."—*Bähr*. **The tribe of Judah only**—Compare marginal references.

**19. Also Judah**—This verse should be enclosed in a parenthesis, as it is merely a remark of the writer occasioned by the closing words of verse 18; so that, says Thenius, "the parenthesis intimates that in truth Judah also was ripe for punishment."

rael which they made. **20** And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. **21** For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king; and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them

sin a great sin. **22** For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; **23** Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. <sup>h</sup> So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.

*d* Chap. 13. 3; 15. 29.—*e* 1 Kings 11. 11, 31.

*f* 1 Kings 12. 20, 23.—*g* 1 Kings 14. 16.—*h* Ver. 6.

**20. All the seed of Israel**—That is, all Israel included in the ten tribes, for the kingdom of Judah had not yet fallen. **Spoilers**—First the Syrians, (chaps. x, 32; xiii, 3,) and lastly the Assyrians, (chap. xv, 19, 29,) who utterly ruined them. Verses 3-6.

**21. He**—Jehovah. **Rent Israel**—Tore it away from Judah. See 1 Kings xi, 13, 32.

**23. To Assyria unto this day**—Thus the Assyrian captivity lasted until our historian's day, and how much longer is not said. The subsequent history of "the ten tribes" has been the subject of endless speculation and inquiry. In the time of Josephus there seems to have been a notion prevailing that the ten tribes abode together in a body of innumerable multitude beyond the Euphrates. *Antiquities*, xi, 5, 2. Also Esdras has a vision of the ten tribes separating themselves from the heathen, and migrating to a distant land never before inhabited by men. *English Apocrypha*, 2 Esdras xiii, 40-47. Perhaps this vision of Esdras was the starting-point of all the speculations about the "Lost Tribes," for they have been "lost" and "found" in nearly every part of Asia, Europe, and North America. But vague traditional tales and ingenious speculations are of little weight to counterbalance the abundant testimony of Scripture on the subject, which may be stated as follows:—

1.) A considerable portion of the Israelitish population never went into the Assyrian exile. The first deportations were by Pul and Tiglath-pileser, (chap. xv, 19, 29; 1 Chron. v, 26,) and in all probability were composed of fewer captives than Shalmaneser (or Sargon, see note on verse 6) carried away after the capture of Samaria and the fall of

the northern kingdom. Sargon's inscription, which would not be likely to make too low an estimate, mentions twenty-seven thousand two hundred and eighty captives, (see note on verse 6,) but the northern kingdom must surely have had a population far exceeding these numbers. Multitudes were, of course, slain in the siege of Samaria, and in previous wars; but supposing them to have been ten times the number of the captives, (two hundred and seventy-two thousand eight hundred—a liberal estimate,) what became of all the rest of Israel, which in David's time numbered eight hundred thousand warriors, which, of course, implies a population of many millions. 2 Sam. xxiv, 9. Doubtless the captives, like those from Jerusalem, (chaps. xxiv, 14, 15; xxv, 12,) were composed chiefly of "the princes, and mighty men of valour, and craftsmen, and smiths, and the king's mother, and wives, and officers, and the mighty of the land"—the flower and strength of the nation, while "the poor of the land, vinedressers and husbandmen," (numerically, perhaps, the majority of the population,) were left in the land, or else fled to other parts. Only "the cities of Samaria" (verse 24) seem to have been depopulated, so that in other and remoter districts of the kingdom a large majority of the population seem to have been left to care for the land. Thus the kingdom of the ten tribes ceased to exist; but numerically the mass of the people were left in their ancient homes. Certain it is that they were not all carried into exile.

2.) The captives were not allowed to settle in one district. Verse 6, compared with 1 Chron. v, 26, may perhaps indicate that a majority of the exiles, both under Tiglath-pileser and Sargon,

were placed in Halah and along the Habor, but others (and how large a proportion does not appear) were scattered abroad in various cities of Media. This fact of their being scattered throughout various parts of the vast Assyrian empire argues against the notion of their continuing their tribe distinctions, and especially of their perpetuating the ten tribes as an organized community.

3.) There is reason to believe that after the fall of Samaria the old enmity between Judah and Israel began to cease. In the reign of Hezekiah arrangements were made to proclaim "throughout all Israel, from Beer-sheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem;" and letters were sent "to Ephraim and Manasseh," accompanied by an exhortation for them "to turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel." Many scorned the invitation, but "divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem," so that there appeared at the passover "many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun." And on that proud occasion "all the congregation of Judah, with the priests and the Levites, and all the congregation that came out of Israel, and the strangers that came out of the land of Israel, and that dwelt in Judah, rejoiced," for it was the first occasion of the kind "since the time of Solomon the son of David," and it betokened a reunion of the divided kingdom. See 2 Chron. xxx. At the close of the passover it is also said that "all Israel that were present went out," and utterly destroyed all the signs of idolatry "out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh." Chap. xxxi, 1. The like thing was done by Josiah, (chap. xxiii, 19; 2 Chron. xxxiv, 7; xxxv, 18,) who also collected money for repairing the temple "of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin." 2 Chronicles xxxiv, 9. Such a coming together in their now oppressed land would rapidly efface from Judah and Israel their

ancient bitterness and jealousy. The better portion of all the people would see and obey the manifest will of Jehovah, and the rest, having no bond of union, would gradually, like all foolish factions, die and fade away.

4.) The prophets with one voice represent both Judah and Israel as returning together from their exile. More than a century after the fall of Samaria Judah also was led into exile, and Jeremiah, who flourished at that time, began at once to comfort them with prophecies of a restoration. He says, "The house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers." Jer. iii, 18; comp. xxx, 3; xxxiii, 7. "The children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God." Jer. i, 4. So we may believe that the chastisement of the exile not only cleansed all Israel from idolatry, but also utterly crushed out the old tribal feuds and jealousies. Ezekiel also prophesies: "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Ezek. xxxvii, 21, 22; compare also verses 16-20. Other similar prophecies may be found in these same prophets, and also in Isa. xi. 11-13; xiv, 1; Hosea i, 11; Micah ii, 12. Some of these prophecies are doubtless Messianic; but all have more or less to show that in their exile Judah and Israel became united in all their higher sympathies and hopes, and were thus prepared, whenever opportunity offered, to return together to the land of their fathers.

5.) Finally, all we know of the subsequent history of Israel tends to confirm these prophecies, and to show that in the lands of their exile, and else-

where, Judah and Israel became largely intermingled. Three successive deportations of Jews seem to have been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, (chaps. xxiv, 11-16; xxv, 11; Jer. lii, 30,) and yet it is probable that all these captives were not, numerically, a majority of the population of Judah. The vast multitude of the poorer classes were left in the land, (chaps. xxiv, 14; xxv, 12.) and some fled to other countries. We have no record of all the localities in which these captives were placed, but as the Babylonian empire under Nebuchadnezzar comprised a large portion of the ancient Assyrian, it is very likely that many of the Jewish exiles were settled in cities and districts already occupied by descendants of those Israelites from the cities of Samaria who had been carried off by the Assyrian kings more than a century before. Ezekiel, a prophet of the Jewish exiles, is made "a watchman unto the house of Israel." Ch. iii, 17. When Cyrus issued his proclamation for the Jews to return and rebuild the temple, he had dominion over all the lands into which either Jews or Israelites had been exiled, but he seems to know of no such distinction as "Judah and Israel." He proclaims, "Who is there among you of *all his people*," (Ezra i, 3;) and subsequently Artaxerxes decrees "that *all they of the people of Israel*, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem," may return from exile; and Keil well asks, "Who could maintain, with any show of reason, that no one belonging to the ten tribes availed himself of this permission?" In Ezra ii, 64, 65, the whole number of those who first returned from the captivity is said to have been forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, "besides their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven;" but the previous list of families, which seems to be "of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites," (chapter i, 5,) amounts to only twenty-nine thousand eight hundred and eighteen. Hence it has been plausibly inferred that the gross number, forty-two thou-

sand three hundred and sixty, includes many representatives of the ten tribes. Then in the offerings that were made by the returned exiles at the feast of dedication, "twelve he goats" were offered "for a sin offering for *all Israel, according to the number of the tribes of Israel*," Ezra vi, 17. Compare, also, chapter viii, 35. "There is no doubt," says Keil, "that the majority of those who returned with Zerubbabel and Ezra belonged to the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi; which may be explained very simply from the fact, that as they had been a much shorter time in exile, they had retained a much stronger longing for the home given by the Lord to their fathers than the tribes that were carried away one hundred and eighty years before." Hence, too, it is, that since the captivity, the common name for all Israelites, wherever scattered abroad, is *Jews*. We must also remember that, with the fall of Samaria, Jehovah "caused to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel," (Hos. i, 4;) it had no longer an existence, but was largely absorbed by Judah; and therefore it is not to be wondered at that no express mention is made of descendants of the ten tribes returning along with Judah from exile.

But there were vast multitudes of Judah and Israel that never accepted the offer to return to the fatherland. They chose to remain in their new homes; and subsequently, under Ahasuerus, the Jews are spoken of as "scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces" of the Persian empire. Esther iii, 8. On the day of Pentecost there were at Jerusalem devout Jews "out of every nation under heaven," who had been born among, and spoke as their vernacular the languages of, the "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome." Acts ii, 5-10. Josephus also speaks of the great numbers of Jews who in his time dwelt in Babylon, Mesopotamia, and beyond the Euphrates. *Antiquities*, xv, 2, 2; iii, 1

**24** <sup>i</sup> And the king of Assyria brought men <sup>k</sup> from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from <sup>l</sup> Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the

<sup>i</sup> Ezra 4. 2, 10.—<sup>k</sup> See verse 30.

xviii, 9, 1. Paul speaks of "our twelve tribes," (Acts xxvi, 7.) and James addresses his epistle "to the twelve tribes scattered abroad;" (chap. i, 1;) from all which we infer that after the Babylonish exile the old division of "Judah and Israel" became lost, all the scattered tribes became intermixed, no one region held any one tribe or any definite number of tribes, the name of Jews was applied to them all, the ten tribes as a distinct nation had long ceased to exist, and the whole body of Israelites throughout the world became amalgamated into one people, recognising themselves as the descendants and representatives of the twelve ancient tribes.

#### ORIGIN OF THE SAMARITANS, 24-41.

**24. The king of Assyria brought**—This king was Sargon, who tells us in his inscription that he "took and occupied the city of Samaria, and... changed the former government of the country, and placed over it lieutenants of his own." See the note on verse 6. It appears from Ezra iv, 2, that subsequently Esar-haddon also transported colonists to the cities of Samaria. **From Babylon**—Either from the city or province, for the whole of Babylonia belonged at this time to the Assyrian empire. **Cuthah**—Called, in verse 30, *Cuth*. Its site has been the subject of dispute and uncertainty, but G. Rawlinson is confident that it was a city near Babylon whose ruins are now called Ibrahim. He says, (*Herodotus*, vol. i, p 515,) "The city was called *Digona* by Ptolemy, *Digba* by Pliny, *Digubis* in the Peutingerian map. The ruins of Cuthah, distant about twelve miles from Babylon, were first discovered by Sir H. Rawlinson in 1846, and have since been repeatedly visited by travellers." In the Chaldee and the Talmud the Samaritans are called *Cuthites*, and hence some have thought that

children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. **25** And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the Lord: therefore the Lord sent

<sup>l</sup> Chap. 18. 34, *Ivah*.

the main portion of these colonists came from *Cuthah*. Compare also *Josephus*, ix, 14, 3. "With almost equal confidence," adds Rawlinson, (*Historical Evidences*, p. 341,) "may we pronounce on the position of **Ava**, of which Winer says, that it is most probably a Mesopotamian town, 'of which no trace remains in ancient authors, or in modern Oriental topography.' *Ava*, or *Ivah*, (chap. xviii, 34,) is a city dedicated to the god Hea, (Neptune,) which was on the Euphrates, at the extreme northern limit of Babylonia. It is called by the Talmudical writers *Ihi*, or with an epithet, *Ihi-dakira*, by Herodotus *Is*, by the Egyptians *Ist*, by the Turks and Arabs of the present day *Hit*. The first corruption of the name may be traced in the *Ahava* of Ezra, (chap. viii, 15, 21,) where the Jews encamped on their way from Babylon to Jerusalem." **Hamath**—On the Orontes. See on Josh. xiii, 5; 1 Kings viii, 65. This city had probably been subjected to Assyria during the reign of Tiglath-pileser. **Sepharvaim**—Doubtless identical with the Sippara of Ptolemy, which was situated on the Euphrates above Babylon, near the modern Mosaib. The dual form of the name is explained from the fact, noted in the inscriptions, that the city was built on each side of the river. Berosus calls it a *city of the sun*, and, according to Rawlinson, the inscriptions give it the same name. Hence a reason why "the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire." Verse 31. **They possessed Samaria**—And hence their descendants are called, even to this day, *Samaritans*.

**25. They feared not the Lord**—For they were idolaters, (verses 30, 31,) and knew nothing of Jehovah. **The Lord sent lions**—The theocratic historian views all calamities as Divine dispensations. Compare Levit. xxvi, 22. It was very natural that wild beasts

tions among them, which slew *some* of them. **26** Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner of the God of the land. **27** Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there,

and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land. **28** Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the Lord. **29** Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. **30** And the men of <sup>m</sup>Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Ha-

*m* Verse

24.

should multiply and become dangerous in a region so suddenly and so largely depopulated as was Samaria. And it is probable that the number of the new colonists was much smaller than that of the exiles, and **at the beginning of their dwelling there** they would be likely to cleave together, and not occupy the wilder districts.

**26. The manner of the God of the land**—The *manner* in which he ought to be recognised and worshipped. It was a common doctrine of ancient heathenism that each country had its local deity, its special tutelary god. **Therefore he hath sent lions**—The idolaters recognise in their distress a divine dispensation.

**28. One of the priests . . . from Samaria**—Probably one of the priests of Jeroboam's calf-worship, and therefore not Levitical. Compare verse 32, note. As was natural with one of those priests, he **came and dwelt in Beth-el**, which had been the principal seat of the calf-worship, (1 Kings xii, 28–33,) and perhaps, as Bähr supposes, he erected there images like the golden calves which had been taken away. **Taught them how they should fear the Lord**—But taught them very imperfectly, as the sequel shows. As Jeroboam's attempt to identify or associate the golden calves with the God of the Exodus (1 Kings xii, 28) became a sin to Israel, so this priest's teaching by means of images, or from the standpoint of the old calf-worship, resulted, as the following verses show, in a mixed and confusing system of religion.

**29. Every nation made gods of their own**—While trying to observe

the manner of the god of their new country they did not reject or neglect their old divinities. This was no inconsistency for a heathen, for none of these idolaters supposed that the gods of his own land were the only true divinities. **Houses of the high places**—Which the exiled Israelites had built, and which had been left standing in the various cities of Samaria. **The Samaritans** in this verse are not the new colonists, but the former Israelitish population, called *Samaritans* from the name of their capital city.

**30. Succoth-benoth**—These words mean, in Hebrew, *tents of daughters*; and most expositors explain them of the tents in which the Babylonian women prostituted themselves in honour of Mylitta, the Assyrian Venus.—*Herodotus*. But the context shows that *Succoth-benoth* is the name of an idol, as are **Nergal** and **Ashima**; and Fürst thinks its etymology must not be sought in Hebrew. Sir H. Rawlinson considers it a modified form of the name of *Zirbanit*, who was worshipped at Babylon, and is represented in the inscriptions as the wife of *Bel-Merodach*. "From a passage in the great inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, where the goddess is, as usual, associated with Merodach, it is evident that *Zir* must be a proper name, and that *banit*, 'genitrix,' is the mere feminine of *bann*, which is one of the standard epithets of Merodach. The name, as written in the passage referred to, is *Zir Umbanitra*, or 'Zir, the mother who bore me;' and it is almost certain that in this title we must look for the original form of the *Succoth-benoth* of Scripture, the god-

math made Ashima, 31<sup>a</sup> And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and

<sup>a</sup> Ezra 4. 9.

dess worshipped by the Babylonian colonists in Samaria."—RAWLINSON'S *Herodotus*, vol. i, p. 513. **Nergal**—This idol is thus described by G. Rawlinson: (*Ancient Monarchies*, vol. i, p. 136:) "His name is evidently compounded of the two Hamitic roots *nir*, 'a man,' and *gula*, 'great,' so that he is 'the great man,' or 'the great hero.' He is the special god of war and of hunting, more particularly of the latter. His titles are, 'the king of battle,' 'the champion of the gods,' 'the storm ruler,' 'the strong begetter,' 'the tutelar god

the Sepharvites' burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech, and Anammelech,

<sup>o</sup> Lev. 18. 21; Deut. 12. 31.

of Babylonia,' and 'the god of the chase.' The city peculiarly dedicated to Nergal was Cutha, which is constantly called his city in the inscriptions." **Ashima**—Of this idol little is known, and its name is of uncertain etymology. The rabbies assert that it was worshipped under the form of a *bare goat*, that is, a goat without wool, but this opinion seems to rest on no certain evidence. Possibly *Ashima* (אִשִּׁימָא) is identical with *Eshmon*, (אִשְׁמֹן,) the Phenician Esculapius, or god of medicine.



Winged Man-Lion from Nineveh. Nergal's Emblem. Now in British Museum.

31. **Nibhaz and Tartak**, idols of the **Avites**, are also unknown, save that rabbinical conjecture assigns to *Nibhaz* the form of a dog, and to *Tartak* the form of an ass. Of the character of the gods of **Sepharvaim** more can be said. The sacrifice of children as burnt offerings to them clearly indicate that they were fire-gods, akin to **Molech**. Hence **Adrammelech** and **Anammelech** would obviously seem to be respectively the male and female deities of fire. "The male and female

powers of the sun," says Rawlinson, "whose worship at Sippara was celebrated throughout the East, were with more than their usual accuracy identified by the Greeks with the Apollo and Diana of their own mythology; and they are, of course, represented in Scripture by the *Adrammelech* and *Anammelech* to whom the Sepharvites burnt their children in the fire. The meaning of these Hebrew names is not very certain. *Adrammelech* may be 'the fire-king,' or it may be 'the royal arranger,

the gods of Sepharvaim. **32** So they feared the Lord,<sup>p</sup> and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places. **33** <sup>q</sup> They feared the Lord, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations <sup>r</sup> whom they carried away from thence. **34** Unto this day they do after

the former manners: they fear not the Lord, neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, <sup>s</sup> whom he named Israel; **35** With whom the Lord had made a covenant, and charged them, saying, <sup>t</sup> Ye shall not fear other gods, nor <sup>u</sup> bow yourselves

<sup>p</sup> 1 Kings 12. 31.—<sup>q</sup> Zeph. 1. 5.—<sup>r</sup> Or, *who carried them away from thence.*

<sup>r</sup> Gen. 32. 23; 35. 10; 1 Kings 11. 31.—<sup>s</sup> Judges 6. 10.—<sup>t</sup> Exod. 20. 5.

*ediru* and *gamilu*, 'the arranger' and 'benefactor,' being epithets which, together, are frequently applied to the gods, and which are sufficiently applicable to the sun. *Anammelech*, for the female sun, cannot be explained, unless it be connected with the name *Anunit*. The female power of the sun is named *Gula* or *Anunit*; but her primitive Babylonian name seems to have been *Ai*, and it is under that form that she is found in most Babylonian documents to be associated as an object of worship with the sun. It is possible that *Ai*, *Gula*, and *Anunit* may represent the female power of the sun in his three different phases of rising, culminating, and setting, for the names do not appear to be interchangeable, and yet they are equally associated with the sun-god."—*Herodotus*, vol. i, p. 497.

**32. The lowest of them priests**—As Jeroboam had done. See note on 1 Kings xii, 31. This fact further argues (compare note on verse 28) that the priest who taught these nations the fear of Jehovah was one of Jeroboam's order.

**33. Feared the Lord, and served their own gods**—This was no inconsistency for them, as it would have been in a true Israelite, who recognised no god but Jehovah. It was the manner, that is, the judgment, the common opinion of the nations represented by these colonists, that in settling in a new country they should acknowledge and fear the god of that country no less than the deities of their native land. See notes on verses 28, 29. **Whom they carried away from thence**—Rather, *whence they carried them away*, or, *whence they had been carried away*.

**34. They do**—*They* here refers to

the mixed population, composed of the colonists from the several Eastern nations mentioned in the preceding verses. **After the former manners**—They continued in our historian's day to practice the mixed religion described in verses 29–33. **They fear not the Lord**—That is, as is immediately explained, they do not reverence and worship him according to the requirements of that holy law which he gave to the people **whom he named Israel**. There was at least a portion of them who, like the teaching priest and other Israelites at Beth-el, worshipped Jehovah in connexion with images like the golden calves of Jeroboam; but this was a form of worship so akin to idolatry, and so alien to the requirements of the law, that our author does not attempt to distinguish particularly the different classes of the people, but treats them all as being in irreconcilable antagonism to the **statutes and ordinances** of the true *Israel*.

Thus these Samaritans continued till the return of the Jews from exile, when they desired to unite with Zerubbabel and the chief of the fathers in rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem. Ezra iv, 2. The latter denied their request, and thenceforth the Samaritans were regarded as "the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin." They long hindered the rebuilding of the temple, and also opposed Nehemiah in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Neh. iv. Subsequently a son of Jehoiada, the high priest, married the daughter of Sanballat the Samaritan governor, (Neh. xiii, 28,) and was expelled from Jerusalem, whereupon he withdrew to the Samaritans, and Sanballat built for him a temple on Mount Gerizim to rival that at Jerusalem. JOSEPHUS, *Antiq.*,

to them nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: **36** But the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt with great power and "a stretched out arm, "him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. **37** And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment, which he wrote for you, "ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods. **38** And the covenant that I have made with you "ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. **39** But the LORD your God ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. **40** Howbeit they did not hearken, but they did after their former manner. **41** "So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven

<sup>u</sup> Exodus 6. 6.—<sup>v</sup> Deuteronomy 10. 20.—<sup>w</sup> Deuteronomy 5. 32.—<sup>x</sup> Deuteronomy 4. 23.—<sup>y</sup> Verses 32, 33.

xi, 8, 2, 4. From this time the Samaritans seem to have gradually abandoned their earlier idolatry, and became thoroughly monotheistic, but the enmity between them and the Jews never ceased. It rather became intensified, and in the time of our Lord the two nations had no dealings with each other. John iv, 9. Compare note on Matt. x, 5. A remnant of the Samaritans still linger in the vale of Shechem, and three times a year go up to the top of Mount Gerizim to worship.

### SECTION THIRD.

#### HISTORY OF JUDAH

FROM THE FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL  
TO THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY.

CHAPS. XVIII-XXV.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

BEGINNING OF HEZEKIAH'S REIGN,  
1-8.

1. **In the third year**—Near the close of the *third year*, so that the greater part of Hezekiah's first year would fall in the fourth year of Hoshea, and the greater part of Hezekiah's fourth year would fall in the seventh of Hoshea. See verses 9, 10.

2. **Twenty and five years old**—Since Ahaz was only thirty-six years old at his death, (chap. xvi, 2, note,)

images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

#### CHAPTER XVIII.

**NOW** it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* <sup>a</sup> Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. **2** Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was <sup>b</sup> Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. **3** And he did *that which was right* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. **4** <sup>c</sup>He removed the high places, and brake the <sup>d</sup>images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the <sup>e</sup>brazen serpent that Moses had

<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 28. 27; 29. 1; Matt. 1. 9, *Ezekias*.  
<sup>b</sup> 2 Chron. 29. 1, *Abijah*.—<sup>c</sup> 2 Chron. 31. 1.  
<sup>d</sup> Heb. *statues*.—<sup>e</sup> Num. 21. 9.

he must have begotten this son Hezekiah when about eleven years old. To show that this was not impossible, Keil instances the following: "In the East they marry girls of nine or ten years of age to boys of twelve or thirteen. VOLNEY, *Reisen*, xi, p. 360.) Among the Indians husbands of ten years of age and wives of eight are mentioned. THEVENOT, *Reisen*, cxi, pp. 100, 165. In Abyssinia boys of twelve and even ten years old marry. RUPPELL, *Abyssynien*, xi, p. 59. Among the Jews in Tiberias, mothers of eleven years of age and fathers of thirteen are not uncommon (BURCKH., *Syria*, p. 570;) and Lynch saw a wife there, who to all appearance was a mere child about ten years of age, who had been married two years already." Others, however, suppose a corruption in the text of chap. xvi, 2, and with the Syriac and Arabic versions at 2 Chron. xxviii, 1, make Ahaz forty years old at his death. **His mother's name**—"The names of the mothers of all the later kings of Judah are mentioned in Holy Scripture; intimating the importance of a mother's influence, especially in evil days."—Wordsworth.

4. **High places**—See on 1 Kings iii, 2. **Images...groves**—See note on 1 Kings xiv, 15, 23. **Brake in pieces the brazen serpent**—Compare Num. xxi, 9. This ancient relic would

made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it *Nehushtan*. **5** He <sup>e</sup>trusted in the Lord God of Israel; 'so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any* that were before him. **6** For he <sup>e</sup>clave to the Lord, and departed not <sup>3</sup>from following him, but kept his commandments, which the

<sup>2</sup> That is, *A piece of brass*.—*e* Chap. 19, 10; Job 13, 14; Psa. 13, 5.—*f* Chap. 23, 25.—*g* Deut. 10, 20; Josh. 23, 8.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *from after him*.

naturally acquire, in the lapse of time, a mysterious sanctity, and would easily become an object of idolatry to a people so habituated to *high places* and *images* and *groves* as both Israel and Judah had now become; and Hezekiah was convinced that the only sure way to stop this form of idolatry was to *break* the brazen thing *in pieces*. It would seem great sacrilege to destroy a relic so ancient and so sacred, but it was idolatry to preserve it. Winer and Bähr think that this was not the identical **brazen serpent that Moses had made**, but one like it, which the sensuous people in a time of idolatry had made in remembrance of what Moses had done and commanded. But this exposition contradicts the text, and cannot therefore be sustained in the absence of any other notice of the brazen serpent since the time of Moses. **Unto those days**—That is, the days of Hezekiah. How long previously the **children of Israel** had been accustomed to **burn incense to it** does not appear, but probably from the beginning of idolatrous practices in the kingdom; certainly not from the days of Moses. **He called it Nehushtan**—*Nehushtan* means *brazen*, and hence many interpreters understand that when the king destroyed this idol *he called it*, by way of contempt, *Nehushtan*, "the brazen thing." Others take the words *he called* indefinitely, in the sense of *it was called*, or *they called it*, indicating that *Nehushtan* was the title by which the brazen serpent was popularly called. So Bähr explains that the name originated in the glowing red or fiery colour of the brass, and is equivalent to the "Glowing-red One," the "Consuming One," the "Furning One."

LORD commanded Moses. **7** And the LORD <sup>b</sup>was with him; and he <sup>i</sup>prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he <sup>k</sup>rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. **8** <sup>1</sup>He smote the Philistines, *even* unto <sup>4</sup>Gaza, and the borders thereof, <sup>m</sup>from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

<sup>h</sup> 2 Chron. 15, 2.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Sam. 18, 5, 14; Psa. 60, 12.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 16, 7.—<sup>l</sup> 1 Chron. 4, 41; Isa. 14, 29.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *Azzah*.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 17, 9.

**5. None like him**—According to Keil, "this verdict refers to Hezekiah's confidence in God, (בטח,) in which he had no equal; whereas in the case of Josiah, his conscientious adherence to the Mosaic law is extolled in the same words; so that there is no ground for saying that there is a contradiction between our verse and chap. xxiii, 25." But Josiah's "confidence in God" was also great, for he "turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might," (chap. xxiii, 25,) and Hezekiah also adhered to the Mosaic law, (verse 6,) so that Keil's distinction has hardly a sufficient basis in the two passages. Better, therefore, to understand the form of expression in both passages after the manner of Oriental hyperbole, as in a measure proverbial of any one who was very conspicuous for certain qualities, and not to be explained with literal precision.

**7. Rebelled against the king of Assyria**—By refusing to pay the customary tribute, and proclaiming himself independent of Assyria. This was the cause of Sennacherib's invasion. Verse 13.

**8. Smote the Philistines**—Who in the reign of Ahaz "had invaded the cities of the low country, and of the south of Judah." 2 Chron. xxviii, 18. **Unto Gaza**—In the southern part of the great Philistine plain, (see on Josh. x, 41,) so that he probably recovered all the cities that the Philistines had taken from Judah. **From the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city**—That is, from the more exposed districts to the fortified towns. See note on chap. xvii, 9. Keil is of opinion that this war against the Philistines occurred after the defeat of Sennacherib.

9 And "it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. 10 And at the end of three years they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, *that is* " the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. 11 "And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto

Assyria, and put them "in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes: 12 "Because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, *and* all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear *them*, nor do *them*.

13 Now "in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did "Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced

n Chap. 17. 3. —o Chap. 17. 6. —p Chap. 17. 6.  
q 1 Chron. 5. 26.

r Chap. 17. 7; Dan. 9. 6, 10. —s 2 Chron. 32. 1, &c.;  
Isa. 36. 1, &c. —t Heb. *Sennacherib*.

### FALL OF THE KINGDOM OF ISRAEL, 9-12.

The fall of the kingdom of Israel was so important and memorable a catastrophe that it was recorded in the annals of Judah as well as in those of Israel; and one object of our historian in introducing a notice of it here, seems to be to contrast it with the greater permanence of Judah under the God-fearing Hezekiah. Judah successfully rebelled against Assyria because her king trusted in Jehovah and kept his law; Israel fell because her people "obeyed not the voice of the Lord their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded." Verse 12.

#### 9. Fourth year . . . seventh year—

That is, the greater part of the *fourth* year of Hezekiah fell in the *seventh* year of Hoshea. See note on verse 1.

10. **They took it**—Here, as in chap. xvii, 6, it is noticeable that the writer does not say that Shalmaneser captured Samaria, though his narrative seems to imply it. See note on chap. xvii, 6.

### SENNACHERIB'S INVASION OF JUDAH, 13-16.

Of Hezekiah's reign, as recorded from this point on through chap. xx, we have a parallel history in Isaiah xxxvi-xxxix, which on the whole agrees so closely with this history in Kings as to necessitate the conclusion that both narratives had one and the same author. Which is the original copy, or whether both narratives as we now have them were drawn from a source older than either, are questions which have been variously answered by the critics and interpreters. Some have held that

this account in Kings is the original one, and that of Isaiah is taken from it, whilst others have maintained precisely the reverse opinion. But against both these views stands the fact that each narrative contains matter not found in the other. Not to speak of numerous verbal differences, it will be observed that the account of Sennacherib's first invasion, and Hezekiah's submission and payment of tribute, (verses 14-16,) is altogether wanting in Isaiah, and Isaiah's hymn of thanksgiving (xxxviii, 9-20) is wanting in Kings. It follows, therefore, either that both accounts have been taken from some older history no longer extant, or else that both were composed by one and the same author, who made verbal changes, and added or omitted certain things in each narrative according to his own judgment and the design of the work to which each belonged. Beyond this it is impossible now to make any positive decision.

13. **The fourteenth year**—According to Rawlinson, this date is irreconcilable with the Assyrian inscriptions, and he proposes to read *twenty-seventh* for *fourteenth*. **Sennacherib**—The son and successor of Sargon. "The long notices which we possess of this monarch in the books of the Old Testament, his intimate connexion with the Jews, the fact that he was the object of a preternatural exhibition of the Divine displeasure, and the remarkable circumstance that this miraculous interposition appears under a thin disguise in the records of the Greeks, have always attached an interest to his name which the kings of this remote period and distant region very rarely awaken. It has

cities of Judah, and took them. **14** And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: that which

thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold.



Sennacherib on his Throne before Lachish.

also happened that the recent Mesopotamian researches have tended to give to Sennacherib a special prominence over other Assyrian monarchs, more particularly in this country, [England,] our great excavator [Layard] having devoted his chief efforts to the disinterment of a palace of this great king's construction, which has supplied to our National Collection almost one half of its treasures. The result is, that while the other sovereigns who bore sway in Assyria are generally wholly unknown, or float before the mind's eye as dim and shadowy forms, *Sennacherib* stands out to our apprehension as a living and

breathing man, the impersonation of all that pride and greatness which we assign to the Ninevite kings, the living embodiment of Assyrian haughtiness, Assyrian violence, and Assyrian power."—RAWLINSON, *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii, p. 155. **All the fenced cities**—The fortified towns, forty-six in number according to the inscriptions. See below.

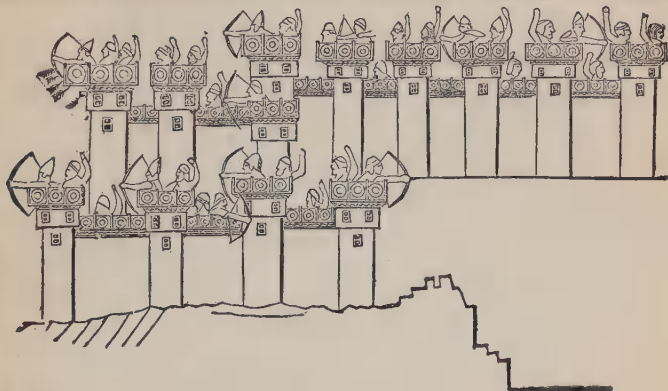
**14. Sent to... Lachish**—Which city Sennacherib was at the time besieging. On its location see at Josh. x, 3. It is said in 2 Chron. xxxii, 9 that he "laid siege against Lachish, and all his power with him." Layard found what he regarded as a representation of this siege on the slabs which he exhumed at Nineveh, and which bear the following inscription: "Sennacherib, the mighty king, king of the country of Assyria, sitting on the throne of judgment before the city of Lachish—I give permission for its slaughter." The cut on the opposite page is supposed to represent Lachish, defended by double walls, with bulwarks and towers, and resisting the attack of the Assyrians. Comp. note on chap. xix, 8. **I have offended**—This humiliation and submission of Hezekiah doubtless grew out of a feeling of his inability to cope with so formidable a power as Assyria. According to 2 Chron. xxxii, 2-6 he prepared himself for a siege by strengthening the fortifications of Jerusalem, and manufacturing arms in abundance, and stopping the fountains and streams outside of the city to prevent their being used by the besieging army. But for all this he trembled when he saw the principal cities of his kingdom fallen into the hands of that power that had so recently carried Israel into captivity. **Three hundred talents of silver**—About five hundred thousand dollars. **Thirty talents of gold**—The gold talent of the Hebrews is supposed to have been worth fifty-six thousand nine hundred dollars, and *thirty* such *talents* would equal one million seven hundred and

15 And Hezekiah <sup>†</sup>gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house. 16 At that time did Hezekiah

cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the Lord, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave <sup>‡</sup>it to the king of Assyria.

<sup>†</sup> Chap. 16. 8.

6 Heb. *them*.



Defence of Lachish. From Assyrian Monuments.

seven thousand dollars. Accordingly the whole amount demanded of Hezekiah was over two millions of dollars.

15. **All the silver. . . in the house of the Lord, and. . . king's house—**

Again and again had the treasures of Jerusalem been emptied to pay similar exactions, (compare chapters xii, 18; xvi, 8,) but various wars of conquest had enabled successive kings to replenish them again; many presents were, also, brought from various quarters and deposited with the king. Comp. 2 Chron. xxxii, 23, 27.

16. **Cut off the gold from the doors—**In the first year of his reign Hezekiah had repaired **the doors of the temple**, (2 Chron. xxix, 3,) but it is not said that he **overlaid** them with gold, which word our translators have here supplied without sufficient authority. He doubtless used various kinds of metal, gold among the rest; and this cutting it off again to give to the king of Assyria shows how difficult it was for him to raise the required amount.

It is interesting to find the above confirmed in the Assyrian annals by the following inscription of Sennacherib, discovered among the ruins of Nin-

veh: "Because Hezekiah, king of Judah, would not submit to my yoke, I came up against him, and by force of arms and by the might of my power I took forty-six of his strong-fenced cities; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about I took and plundered a countless number. And from these places I captured and carried off as spoil two hundred thousand one hundred and fifty people, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, like a bird in a cage, building towers round the city to hem him in, and raising banks of earth against the gates so as to prevent escape. Then upon this Hezekiah there fell the fear of the power of my arms, and he sent out to me the chiefs and the elders of Jerusalem with thirty talents of gold and eight hundred talents of silver, and divers treasures, a rich and immense booty. All these things were brought to me at Nineveh, the seat of my government, Hezekiah having sent them by way of tribute, and as a token of his submission to my

17 And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-shakeh from

7 Heb.

power."—RAWLINSON'S *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii, p. 161. The discrepancies, whether apparent or real, between the inscription and the biblical narrative are of little moment compared with the unquestionable confirmation hereby given to the historical veracity of the sacred writers. It will be noticed that the inscription tells with pompous gusto of the Assyrian successes and the spoil that was taken, but makes no record of the disasters which befell the army of Sennacherib. This was in perfect keeping with what we know of the pride and arrogance of all the Assyrian kings.

RAB-SHAKEH'S INSULTING MESSAGE TO HEZEKIAH, 17-37.

17. **The king of Assyria sent... from Lachish**—According to Josephus (*Antiq.*, x, 1, 1) Sennacherib bound himself to depart from Jerusalem upon receiving the three hundred silver and thirty gold talents mentioned above, but having received it, "had no regard to what he had promised; but while he himself went to the war against the Egyptians and Ethiopians, he left his general Rab-shakeh and two others of his principal commanders, with great forces, to destroy Jerusalem." But it seems better to refer this siege of Jerusalem to a second invasion of Sennacherib, made a year or more after he had received Hezekiah's submission and tribute of gold and silver, for it appears from verse 21 that Hezekiah had formed some alliance with Egypt, and so, like Hoshea, (compare chapter xvii, 4,) "brought no present to the king of Assyria." This is the view of Rawlinson, who describes the matter thus: "Sennacherib, understanding that the real enemy whom he had to fear on his southwestern frontier was not Judea but Egypt, marched his army through Palestine—probably by the coast route—and without stopping to chastise Jerusalem, pressed southwards to Libnah and Lachish, which were at the extreme verge of the Holy

Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem: and they went

heavy.

Land, and probably at this time subject to Egypt. He first commenced the siege of Lachish 'with all his power,' (2 Chron. xxxii, 9;) and while engaged in this operation, finding that Hezekiah was not alarmed by his proximity, and did not send in his submission, he detached a body of troops from his main force, and sent it under a Tartan, or general, supported by two high officers of the court—the Rabsaris, or chief cupbearer, and the Rabsaris, or chief eunuch—to summon the rebellious city to surrender."—*Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii, p. 165.

**Tartan... Rabsaris... Rab-shakeh**

—These words have, respectively, the meaning given them by Rawlinson in the note just quoted, and from being common official titles came to be used as proper names. The etymology of *Tartan* is uncertain. "The name is said to be derived from the Persian *tar*, summit, and *tan*, person; that is, *high personage*; or from the Persian *tara*, Sanscrit *tara*, a star, and *tan*; consequently, *star-form*."—*Fürst*. The office of chief cupbearer is common in the East. In Gen. xl, 2, 21, he is called "chief of the butlers." Nehemiah held this office at the Persian court. Neh. i, 11; ii, 1. It seems to have been a custom for high officers of the court to accompany the king to battle; and very probably the most loyal and successful generals or captains were rewarded with offices and titles of this kind in the royal court, so that we need not wonder that a royal cupbearer should also be a high military officer. The same may be said of the chief of the eunuchs. "In the Ottoman Porte," says Kitto, "the Kislar Aga, or chief of the black eunuchs, is one of the principal personages in the empire, and in an official paper of great solemnity is styled by the Sultan the most illustrious of the officers who approach his august person, and worthy of the confidence of monarchs and of sovereigns. It is, therefore, by no means improbable that such an office

up and came to Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which is in the highway of the fuller's field. 18 And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Elia-

kim the son of Hilkiah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. 19 And Rab-shakeh said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria,

*u* Isa. 7. 3

8 Or, *secretary*.

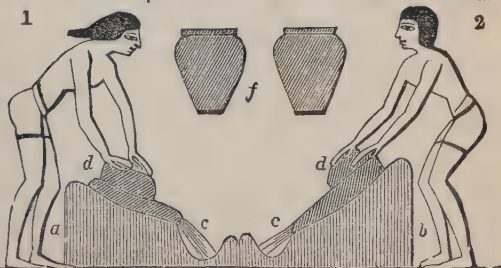
should be associated with such a military commission; perhaps not for directly military duties, but to take charge of the treasure, and to select from the female captives such as might seem worthy of the royal harem." **The conduit of the upper pool**—The *upper pool* is undoubtedly Gihon, at the head of the Hinnom valley, described in note on 1 Kings i, 33. Its **conduit**, or aqueduct, would naturally have been a canal running from it in a southeasterly direction down the valley of Hinnom to the west side of the city. It was, perhaps, identical with the subterranean aqueduct by which Hezekiah himself brought down the waters of this pool "on the west to the city of David." 2 Chron. xxxii, 30. Consequently **the highway of the fuller's field** must have been the road leading from the west side of the city northward, and so called because here was a common resort of the *fullers* of the city, who, on account of the offensive smells and uncleanness of their work, and also for the sake of room to dry cloths, would require a *field* outside the city limits. The approach of the Assyrian host would, therefore, have been from the north, and the commanders **stood** sufficiently near the city to address the people on the wall. Verse 26.

Here, for the first time, we meet with a biblical notice of *fullers*, whose art is of great antiquity. "Of the processes followed in the art of cleaning cloth, and the various kinds of stuff among the Jews, we have no direct knowledge. In an early part of the operation they seem to have trod the cloths

with their feet, as the Hebrew *Ain-Rogel*, or *En-Rogel*, (literally, *foot-fountain*,) has been rendered on rabbinical authority, 'Fuller's Fountain,' on the ground that fullers trod the cloths there with their feet. They were also rubbed with the knuckles, as in modern washing. A subsequent operation was probably that of rubbing the cloth on an inclined plane, in a mode which is figured in the Egyptian paintings, and still preserved in the East."—*M'Clintock and Strong's Cyclopædia*.

18. **Over the household**—Holding the office of royal chamberlain. See note on 1 Kings iv, 6. **Scribe... recorder**—See notes on 2 Sam. viii, 16, 17.

19. **Rab-shakeh said**—He seems to have been the chief speaker—the herald and principal ambassador of the king, while Tartan had higher authority and command in the matter of the movements of the army. **The great king**—Thus the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian kings delighted to be called and to call themselves, for their "princes were altogether kings." Isa. x, 8; compare Ezra vii, 12; Ezek. xxvi, 7; Dan. ii, 37. Hence the frequent occurrence on the monuments of such titles as "great king," "mighty king," "king of hosts," "king of kings," "the glorious king,"



1, 2, Ancient Egyptian Fullers; *a, b*, Inclined tables; *c, c*, The water running off into the trough below; *d, d*, Stones used for rubbing the cloth; *f*, Jars of soap.

\* What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? **20** Thou sayest, (but they are but <sup>10</sup> vain words,) <sup>11</sup> I have counsel and strength for the war. Now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? **21** "Now, behold, thou <sup>12</sup> trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all that trust on him. **22** But if ye say unto me, We trust in the Lord our God: is not that he, whose high places and whose altars

<sup>v</sup> 2 Chr. 32. 10, &c. — <sup>9</sup> Or, *talkest*. — <sup>10</sup> Heb. *word of the lips*. — <sup>11</sup> Or, *But counsel and strength are for the war*.

"the mighty ruler." **What confidence is this**—Better, *what is this trust which thou trustest?* What does it amount to? He refers to Hezekiah's supposed trust in the king of Egypt. Compare verse 21.

**20. But they are but vain words**—Rather, *only a word of the lips*; that is, an idle, inconsiderate saying. Compare Job ii, 2; Prov. xiv, 23.

**21. Staff of this bruised reed**—A figure especially well chosen, since the banks of the Nile, the great river of Egypt, abounded with reeds. Compare also Ezek. xxix, 6. The slender reed is a poor thing to lean upon, and when bruised or broken is still more frail. "Sennacherib compares Egypt with a broken reed, not because he had already broken its power, but because he regarded it as good as already broken."—*Thenius*.

**22. If ye say**—Here Rab-shakeh addresses more directly the three officers of Hezekiah, as also the other people on the wall. The parallel passage in Isaiah (chap. xxxvi, 7) reads, *if thou say*. **Whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away**—Rab-shakeh assumes that the removal of the high places and their altars was an offence to Jehovah, as was also the restricting of his worship to the altar in Jerusalem, and he argues that God would not favour a people whose king was guilty of such sacrilege and impiety. Compare 2 Chron. xxxii, 12.

**23. Give pledges to**—Rather, *enter into inter course with*, or, *make an agreement with*. **If thou be able**—The

Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem?

**23** Now therefore, I pray thee, give <sup>13</sup> pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. **24** How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? **25** Am I now come up without the Lord against this place to destroy it? The Lord said to me,

<sup>v</sup> Ezekiel 29, 6, 7. — <sup>12</sup> Hebrew, *trustest thee*. — <sup>13</sup> Verse 4; 2 Chronicles 31. 1; 33. 12. — <sup>13</sup> Or, *hostages*.

whole verse is a contemptuous assumption of the weakness of the Jewish military force. The sense is, Suppose you make a bargain with the king of Assyria, I venture to say he will deliver you two thousand horses on condition that you furnish men enough to use them as cavalry, and I have no fear that you will be able to meet the condition. "The meaning is not that Hezekiah could not raise two thousand soldiers in all, but that he could not produce so many men who were able to fight as horsemen."—*Keil*.

**24. Turn away the face**—Or, *cause to face about*, that is, put to flight. **One captain of the least**—That is, how canst thou repulse even one of the less valiant officers who commands one of the smallest divisions of the army? The word פָּחָה, here rendered

*captain*, means properly a *governor* or *satrap*. It is "first used of Assyrian subordinate stadtholders and generals; (Isa. xxxvi. 9;) afterwards transferred to the governors and prefects of the Babylonian, (Jer. li, 57; Ezek. xxiii, 6, 23.) Median, (Jer. li, 28,) and Persian empires, (Esther viii, 9; ix, 3;) applied especially to the Persian governors on this side of the Euphrates and in Judea, (Neh. ii, 7, 9; iii, 7; Ezra viii, 36; Haggai i, 14,) Nehemiah and Zerubbabel being such. The word was transplanted into Hebrew by early Assyrian influence."—*Fürst*.

**25. The Lord said to me**—The thought in this verse is thus well para

Go up against this land, and destroy it. **26** Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants in the Syrian language; for we understand it: and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall. **27** But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you?* **28** Then Rabshakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the word of

the great king, the king of Assyria: **29** Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to deliver you out of his hand: **30** Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. **31** Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith the king of Assyria, <sup>15</sup> Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me, and then eat ye every man of his own vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his <sup>16</sup> cistern: **32** Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, <sup>2</sup> a land of corn

<sup>14</sup> Heb. *the water of their feet.*—<sup>v</sup> 2 Chron. 32. 15.—<sup>15</sup> Or, *Seek my favour.* Heb. *Make*

*with me a blessing.* Gen. 32. 20; 33. 11; Prov. 13. 16.—<sup>16</sup> Or, *pit.*—<sup>2</sup> Deut. 8. 7, 8.

phrased by Bähr: "So far from *thy* being justified in relying upon Jehovah, he is, on the contrary, on *our* side, and it is by his command that we are come hither to destroy Jerusalem." It is by no means impossible, but rather probable, that Rabshakeh had heard of, and here alludes to, such prophecies of Jehovah's chastising Judah by the rod of Assyrian power as the one in Isa. x, 5-11. It was perfectly consistent with Assyrian polytheism to believe in the truth and power of Jehovah as well as of other gods. See note on chap. xvii, 29, 33.

**26. Speak... in the Syrian language.**—The Jewish officers thus interrupted Rabshakeh in the midst of his address. Such words as those of verse 25 are, alas! too true, and have support, whether Assyria fully comprehends it or not, in oracles which Jehovah's own prophets have uttered. For a representative of Assyria to speak of them **in the Jews' language in the ears of the people** may easily occasion murmurings and rebellion. **The Syrian language,** more properly the *Aramaic*, (אַרְמִית,) seems at this time to have been commonly understood in Syria, Assyria, and Babylonia. Its close affinity with the Hebrew would enable those who spoke one of these languages as their vernacular easily to acquire the use of the other; but the mass of the people would be familiar only with the tongue

in which they were born. **On the wall**—So it appears that this interview was held near the walls of the city, and within hearing of the soldiers stationed thereon.

**27. That they may eat their own dung.**—"He says in substance: Ye are abusing your common people. In exposing them to a wasting siege ye are bringing them, with yourselves, into the direct extremity, so that they will at last be compelled to consume their own excrement."—Bähr.

**28. Stood and cried.**—He stationed himself more conspicuously before the eyes of the men on the wall, and elevated his voice so as to be distinctly heard by them.

**31. Make an agreement with me by a present.**—A very erroneous rendering of the terse and simple Hebrew עָשׂוּ אִתִּי בְרָכָה, *make along with me a blessing*, namely, the blessing of peace, quiet, security, and plenty, such as that portrayed in the latter part of this verse and in verse 32. **Come out to me.**—The *blessing* of peace that is promised can only be secured by a timely and cheerful surrender.

**32. Until I come.**—From the siege of Lachish and the Egyptian campaign. Compare note on verse 17. This seems to be the most natural reference of these words, for Rabshakeh here speaks in the name of his absent master, who will finish the destruction of that "bruised reed" Egypt, and make the necessary

and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he <sup>17</sup>persuadeth you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. **33** <sup>a</sup>Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? **34** <sup>b</sup>Where are the gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and <sup>c</sup>Ivah? have they delivered Samaria out of mine hand? **35** Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of mine hand, <sup>d</sup>that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of mine hand? **36** But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, An-

<sup>17</sup> Or, *deceiveth*.—*a* Chap. 19, 12; 2 Chron. 32, 14; Isa. 10, 10, 11.—*b* Chap. 19, 13.

preparations for returning to Assyria, and settling his captives in a pleasant land, before he comes to take them away. We need not attempt to define the land referred to; the whole promise was a mere pretext.

**33. Hath any of the gods**—Skillfully and powerfully does the orator close his speech by claiming that none of the gods had thus far been able to resist the power of Assyria. He probably does not mean to imply that the gods of the conquered nation had actually fought against the king of Assyria and been destroyed in the conflict, but rather, that they had not opposed his march. He does not mean to contradict what he says in verse 25, but would, perhaps, have it inferred that the gods of some of these countries, if not all, invited his coming, and favoured his conquests. At least none of them resisted his arms, but the images of some of them he cast into the fire and destroyed. Chap. xix, 18.

**34. On Hamath, Sepharvaim, and Ivah**, see notes on chap. xvii, 24. From the frequent association of Arpad with Hamath (chapter xix, 13; Isa. x, 9; xxxvi, 19; xxxvii, 13; Jer. xlix, 23) it is probable that it was not far from that city, and is, perhaps, identical with Arpad in Northern Syria. The site of Hena has not been identified with certainty. It is usually supposed to have been in Mesopotamia. Some find it in

swer him not. **37** Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiyah, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah <sup>e</sup>with their clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**A**ND <sup>a</sup>it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the Lord. **2** And he sent Eliakim, which was over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to <sup>b</sup>Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz. **3** And they said unto him, Thus saith Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of re-

<sup>c</sup> Chap. 17, 24, *Ava*.—<sup>d</sup> Dan. 3, 15.—<sup>e</sup> Isa. 33, 7.—*a* Isa. 37, 1, &c.—<sup>b</sup> Luke 3, 4, *Esauus*.

a town on the Euphrates called *Anah*, and the Assyrian inscriptions mention a town called *Anat*, on an island in the Euphrates.

**36. The people held their peace**—There must have been an impressive solemnity as well as a noble dignity in that silence of the people, which left the Assyrian ambassadors in complete ignorance of the impression their message and words had made.

## CHAPTER XIX.

HEZEKIAH'S GRIEF AND MESSAGE TO ISAIAH, 1-5.

**1. Rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth**—Customary signs of deep distress and grief. **Went into the house of the Lord**—For it was supposed that Jehovah's eyes were upon that place night and day. Compare verse 14 and 1 Kings viii, 29.

**2. Sent Eliakim . . . and Shebna**—Two of the same officers who had heard Rab-shakeh's speech, and could give an exact report. But in place of Joah, the recorder, he sends the elders of the priests, that is, the heads of the priestly families, who from their age and office would give weight to the message. **To Isaiah**—Who as the prophet of Jehovah was regarded as an authorized expounder of the Divine will.

**3. A day of trouble**—Better, *a day*

buke, and <sup>1</sup>blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. 4 <sup>c</sup>It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, <sup>d</sup>whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will <sup>e</sup>reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the remnant that are <sup>2</sup>left. 5 So the servants of king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

1 Or, *provocation*.—<sup>c</sup> 2 Sam. 16. 12.  
d Chap. 18. 35.—<sup>e</sup> Psal. 50. 21.

of *aiguish*, or, of deep distress. **Rebuke**—Hezekiah recognised in his affliction a Divine reproof and chastisement. **Blasphemy**—A reference to the contempt with which Rab-shakeh had treated the God of Israel; a *day* when such blasphemy abounds, or goes unpunished. Others render רָשָׁעִים *rejection*, or *disdain*, and understand it of contemptuous treatment and rejection of Judah on the part of God. The word is capable of either sense. **Not strength to bring forth**—"The proverb is taken from the crisis in child-bearing, where the child is in the midst of the birth, but the strength of the mother fails on account of the continuous pains, so that she and the child are both in danger. Clericus, therefore, interprets it of the situation of those in great peril, who know what they must do in order to escape, but who feel that it is beyond their power to take the necessary measures, and who fear that, if they should make the attempt, all would be lost."—*Bähr*.

4. **The remnant that are left**—Jerusalem and its besieged inhabitants. The word rendered *left* is better rendered *found*. The thought is, the remnant that are still to be found, those still in existence.

ISAIAH'S REPLY, 6, 7.

7. **I will send a blast upon him**—The translators here evidently meant by *blast* some destructive plague or pestilence. The Hebrew is, literally, *Behold, I put in him a spirit*. Some understand by *spirit* the destroying angel mentioned in verse 35, but it is better to understand it of a Divine im-

■ <sup>f</sup>And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the <sup>g</sup>servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7 Behold, I will send <sup>h</sup>a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.

8 So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against

2 Heb. *found*.—<sup>f</sup> Isa. 37. 6, &c.—<sup>g</sup> Chap. 18. 17.—<sup>h</sup> Verses 35-37; Jer. 51. 1.

pulse that is to seize him, and hurry him blindly on, so that as soon as he hears a certain **rumour** of approaching hosts, he will hasten a retreat **to his own land**, namely, Assyria. The *rumour* here mentioned seems most naturally to refer to the report of the approach of the king of Ethiopia to fight against him. Verse 9. Others understand it of the report of the destruction of his army by the angel of the Lord; but it does not appear from verse 35 that he was absent from his army when the destroying angel smote it. We take it that when the rumour of Tirhakah's approach reached him, he was seized with sudden alarm. He first sends Rab-shakeh to demand again the surrender of Jerusalem, hoping, in case of its surrender, to be able to resist the forces of Egypt. But meantime Jerusalem disdains an answer, the angel suddenly smites his army, and under the impulse of a spirit of alarm and terror he returns to Nineveh. **Fall by the sword**—See the fulfilment of this prediction recorded in verse 37.

SENNACHERIB'S SECOND MESSAGE TO HEZEKIAH, 8-13.

8. **Returned**—From Jerusalem to the king, who was now at **Libnah**, but he probably left "the great host" with which he went up to Jerusalem (verse 17) still encamped against the city, and under command of Tartan, the chief general, Rab-shakeh himself being rather an ambassador and herald than military officer. See note on chap. xviii, 19. *Libnah* was situated in the great Philistine plain, apparently between Makkedah and Lachish, but its site has not been identified. **He was**

Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. **9** And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethi-

opia, Behold, he is come out to fight against thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, **10** Thus shall

i Chap. 18. 14.

k See 1 Sam. 23. 27.



Lachish after its Capture. From Layard's Monuments of Nineveh.

**departed from Lachish**—Whether he had captured the city or had been forced to raise the siege does not appear from the Scriptures, but on a slab discovered at Nineveh appears a plan of Lachish after its capture, with the Assyrian tents pitched within its walls, and Assyrian worship going on. Compare note on chap. xviii, 14.

### 9. Tirhakah king of Ethiopia—

According to Manetho he was the third and last king of the twenty-fifth Egyptian dynasty. His successful resistance of the Assyrian invasion is chronicled on the walls of a temple at Thebes, and his monuments still exist in Egypt and Ethiopia. Rawlinson treats of the events connected with this verse as follows: "The Apis *stelae* show that Tirhakah did not ascend the throne of Egypt till B. C. 690, eight years after this; but he may have been already, as he is called in Scripture, *king of Ethiopia*. It is probable that Sennacherib, having received the submission of Libnah, had advanced upon Egypt. It was important to crush an

Egyptian army which had been collected against him by a certain Sethos, one of the many native princes who at this time ruled in the lower country, before the great Ethiopian monarch Tehrak, or Tirhakah, who was known to be on his march, should effect a junction with the troops of this minor potentate. Sethos, with his army, was at Pelusium, (*Herodotus*, ii, 141,) and Sennacherib, advancing to attack him, had arrived within sight of the Egyptian host, and pitched his camp over against the camp of the enemy, just at the time when Hezekiah received his letter and made the prayer to which Isaiah was instructed to respond. The two hosts lay down at night in their respective stations, the Egyptians and their king full of anxious alarm, Sennacherib and his Assyrians proudly confident, intending on the morrow to advance to the combat and repeat the lesson taught at Raphia and Attaku." —*Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii, p. 167.

**Sent messengers again**—For with the Ethiopian forces before him he did

ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God 'in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. **11** Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and shalt thou be delivered? **12** <sup>m</sup> Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezep, and the children of <sup>a</sup> Eden which were in Thelasar? **13** <sup>o</sup> Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and Ivah?

<sup>l</sup> Chap. 18. 5.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 18. 33.—<sup>n</sup> Ezek. 27. 23.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 18. 34.—<sup>p</sup> Isa. 37. 14, &c.—<sup>q</sup> 1 Sam. 4. 4; Psal. 80. 1.

not wish to have Jerusalem fall upon his rear, and he apparently hoped to awe Hezekiah into a surrender.

**10. Let not thy God...deceive thee**—The arguments urged in this second message are substantially identical with those urged by Rab-shakeh in chap. xviii, 19-35, and were probably prepared by the same officer.

**12. Gozan**—The district on the upper Habor. See note on chap. xvii, 6. **Haran**—Also in Mesopotamia, but lying some distance northwest of Gozan. Here Abraham abode for a time after leaving Ur of the Chaldees, (Gen. xi, 31,) and here a Roman army under Crassus was defeated by the Parthians. It is called *Curra* by the classical writers, and *Charran* in Acts vii, 4. It is doubtless identical with the modern Haran, which is situated on the river Belik, one of the branches of the upper Euphrates. **Rezep** is still a common name in the East, and applied to a number of cities. Most interpreters incline to identify this *Rezep* with a place in eastern Syria which Ptolemy calls *Resapha*. It is about a day's journey west of the Euphrates. **Children of Eden which were in Thelasar**—This last name should be written *Telassar*, and may signify the *hill of Asshur*; so called, perhaps, from some shrine which the Assyrians had there erected to Asshur. *Eden* would seem to be a district of which Telassar was a chief city, but no trace of either has been found.

**13. Where is the king of Hamath**

**14** <sup>a</sup> And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. **15** And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, <sup>a</sup> which dwellest between the cherubim, <sup>a</sup> thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. **16** LORD, <sup>a</sup> bow down thine ear, and hear: 'open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, <sup>a</sup> which hath sent him to reproach the living God. **17** Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the na-

<sup>r</sup> 1 Kings 18. 39; Isaiah 44. 6; Jeremiah 10. 10-12.—<sup>s</sup> Psalm 31. 2.—<sup>t</sup> 2 Chronicles 6. 40.—<sup>u</sup> Verse 4.

—In chap. xviii, 34, we have "gods of Hamath." The arrogant Assyrian claims that neither gods nor kings can resist his power.

#### HEZEKIAH'S PRAYER, 14-19.

**14. Spread it before the Lord**—As containing that which burdens his soul, and brings him in profound humiliation before the most holy place. "The act of spreading out the letter before Jehovah," says Sisco, "is a symbolic presentation of the great distress into which Hezekiah has been brought by Sennacherib, and to which his prayer refers."

**15. Between the cherubim**—Allusion to the arrangements of the place of communion in the sanctuary. See at Exod. xxv, 22. **Thou alone, of all the kingdoms**—The true Hebrew doctrine of the absolute supremacy and ubiquity of God, in distinction from the heathen notion, which the Assyrians held, that each land or kingdom had its god.

**16. Thine ear...thine eyes**— "This express mention of the two chief senses, the development of each of the two chief ideas, according to their details, into a twofold prayer, the complete symmetry of the two clauses of the sentence, the repetition of Jehovah in the second clause—all these conspire to give to the prayer the greatest urgency and emphasis."—*Drechsler*. **Which hath sent him**—Rather, *which he hath sent*; that is, **the words** or the message which Sennacherib had sent.

tions and their lands, **18** And have <sup>†</sup>cast their gods into the fire: for they <sup>were</sup> no gods, but <sup>†</sup>the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. **19** Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, <sup>†</sup>that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou <sup>art</sup> the LORD God, <sup>even</sup> thou only.

**20** Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, <sup>†</sup>*That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *given*.—<sup>v</sup> Psalm 115. 4; Jeremiah 10. 3.—<sup>w</sup> Psalm 83. 18.—<sup>x</sup> Isaiah 37. 21, &c.—<sup>y</sup> Psalm 65. 2.—<sup>z</sup> Lamentations 2. 13.

**18. Cast their gods into the fire**—The *gods* here meant were the *idols*, or graven images of **wood and stone**, as the sequel shows. Having thus destroyed the idols of many nations, and the gods not resisting, well might the king of Assyria ask, Where are those gods? Chap. xviii, 34. "The application of the word *gods* to the mere external image is common in profane as well as sacred writings, and arises from the fact that all idolaters, whatever they may theoretically hold as to the nature of their deities, identify them practically with the stocks and stones to which they pay their adorations."—*Alexander*.

**19. Now**—That is, *at length*; after so much success, and in view of his pride and blasphemy, show the king of Assyria, and **all the kingdoms** he has conquered, that there is one God with whom it is folly to contend.

#### ISAIAH'S ORACLE, 20–34.

This prophecy, so rich in poetic diction, so emphatic in its outbursts of righteous indignation and scorn against Assyria, and so comforting to Judah for its predictions of Assyrian defeat and of coming prosperity and glory for the people of God, consists, 1,) of a scornful rebuke of Sennacherib's pride and boasting, with a prophecy of his humiliation and retreat, (verses 21–28;) 2,) of a cheering pledge that Jehovah would bring about the peace and triumph of Judah and Jerusalem, (29–31;) and, 3,) a solemn announcement of the utter failure of Sennacherib to take the holy city, (32–34.)

king of Assyria <sup>†</sup>I have heard. **21** This <sup>is</sup> the word that the LORD hath spoken concerning him; The virgin <sup>†</sup>the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem <sup>†</sup>hath shaken her head at thee. **22** Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted <sup>thy</sup> voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? <sup>even</sup> against <sup>†</sup>the Holy *One* of Israel. **23** <sup>†</sup>By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said, <sup>†</sup>With the multi-

<sup>a</sup> Job 16. 4; Psa. 22. 7, 8; Lam. 2. 15.—<sup>b</sup> Psa. 71. 22; Isa. 5. 24; Jer. 51. 5.—<sup>c</sup> Heb. *By the hand of*.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 18. 17.—<sup>d</sup> Psa. 20. 7.

**20. Sent to Hezekiah**—This oracle was delivered to Hezekiah in the form of a letter, just as Sennacherib's message had been *sent*. Verse 14. As by one letter Hezekiah had been brought to profoundest grief and humiliation before God, so would Jehovah, by another letter, cheer his soul.

**21. The virgin the daughter of Zion**—Better, *the virgin daughter Zion*. Zion, the chief mountain on which the Jewish metropolis stood, is metaphorically represented as a *virgin daughter*, and thus becomes a personification of Jerusalem and its inhabitants. These are collectively called in the next line of the parallelism **daughter of Jerusalem**. Jerusalem is called a *virgin*, because yet unconquered and inviolate. Compare Isa. xxiii, 12; xlvii, 1; Jer. xlv, 11; Lam. i, 15. **Despised**—A very appropriate word to express the feelings of a *virgin* towards one who aims to destroy her honour. **Laughed thee to scorn**—As one conscious of impregnability. **Hath shaken her head at thee**—Literally, *after thee the head she has shaken*. Jerusalem shakes her head as a gesture of triumphant derision *after* Sennacherib, as after a smitten and flying foe.

**22. Whom hast thou reproached**—Art thou aware of the exalted and holy character of Him against whom thou hast exalted thyself? **Thine eyes on high**—He had uttered his blasphemies as if looking up to the skies on purpose to defy Jehovah.

**23. By thy messengers**—Hebrew, *by the hand of thy messengers*, referring to the letter mentioned verse 14, and

tude of my chariots I am come up to the height of the mountains, to the sides of Lebanon, and will cut down \*the tall cedar trees thereof, and the choice fir trees thereof: and I will enter into the lodgings of his borders, and

5 Heb. *the tulleess*, &c.—6 Or, *the forest and his fruitful field*, Isa. 10. 18.—7 Or, *fenced*.—8 Or, *Hast thou not heard how I have made*

also other messages. **The multitude of my chariots**—So the *Keri* and the parallel passage, Isa. xxxvii, 24; but the *Chethib* seems to be the more original reading, and is, literally, *with chariot of my chariots*. The sense in either case is substantially the same, the latter expression (רכב רכבי) meaning *with my numberless chariots*, or *chariots on chariots*. Compare גוב גובי, locust of locusts, in Nahum iii, 17, which is properly rendered *swarms of locusts*; not *great grasshoppers*, as in our version. **Lebanon... cedar trees... fir trees**—See notes on 1 Kings v, 6, 8. **Lodgings of his borders**—Literally, *lodging place of his extremity*. The Hebrew מלון קצה, is explained, but not to be emended, by the parallel passage in Isaiah, where we have מרום קצו, *height of his extremity*, that is, its extreme summit. Sennacherib's boast is, that he pitches his camp and lodges on the very summit of Lebanon. **Forest of his Carmel**—The word *Carmel* is here to be taken in its primary sense of *garden, cultivated field*; not as a proper name. The *forest of his garden*, or *garden forest*, designates the orchard-like groves, or beautiful parks of choice trees, on the terraces and summit of Lebanon. This pompous boasting of the king of Assyria is not to be understood as literally historical, nor yet as without historical foundation. Sennacherib probably entered Palestine from the north, and so would cross the summit and sides of some part of Lebanon, and this, in connexion with the various triumphs of his march, would be sufficient ground for the hyperbolic language of his boasts. His language is poetical, but not mere poetry; and the whole verse is to be understood of what he has power to do.

24. **Strange waters**—That is, waters of foreign countries; waters strange to

into \*the forest of his Carmel. 24 I have digged and drunk strange waters, and with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of \*besieged places. 25 \*Hast thou not heard long ago how \*I have done it, and of ancient

it long ago, and formed it of ancient times? should I now bring it to be laid waste, and fenced cities to be ruinous heaps?—e Isa. 45. 7.

a native Assyrian. He boasts that he enters strange lands, and digs and drinks their waters. **With the sole of my feet**—As though I were a god, and able to dry up rivers by merely setting my foot upon their waters. **All the rivers of besieged places**—Better, *all the canals of Matzor*; commonly rendered, *all the streams of Egypt*. מצור, *Matzor*, is a poetical name for Egypt, (compare Isa. xix, 6,) and the rivers would naturally refer to the arms or canals of the Nile. So this verse contains Sennacherib's boast of what he intends to do to Egypt. "Just as Lebanon could not stop the expeditions of the Assyrians, or keep them back from the conquest of the land of Canaan, so the desert which separated Egypt from Asia, notwithstanding its want of water, could not prevent his forcing his way through it and laying Egypt waste. The digging of water is not merely 'a reopening of the wells that had been choked up with rubbish, and the cisterns that had been covered up before the approaching enemy,' (Thenius,) but the digging of wells in the waterless desert. *Strange water* is not merely water belonging to others, but water not belonging to this soil, that is, water supplied by a region which had none at other times. By the perfects [I have digged, etc.] the thing is represented as already done—as exposed to no doubt whatever. The drying up of the rivers with the soles of the feet is an hyperbolic expression denoting the omnipotence with which the Assyrian rules over the earth. Just as he digs water in the desert where no water is to be had, so does he annihilate it where mighty rivers exist."—Keil.

25. **Hast thou not heard**—The question expresses surprise that the king of Assyria should be ignorant of

times that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that 'thou shouldst be to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps. **26** Therefore their inhabitants were <sup>o</sup>of small power, they were dismayed and confounded; they were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb, *as* <sup>e</sup>the grass on the housetops, and *as* corn blasted before it be

<sup>f</sup> Isaiah 10. 5. — <sup>g</sup> Hebrew, *short of hand*. <sup>o</sup> Psalm 129. 6. — <sup>h</sup> Psalm 139. 1, &c. — <sup>10</sup> Or, *sitting*.

a matter so notorious as that Assyria was to be the instrument divinely chosen to scourge Israel and Judah. Of **ancient times that I have formed it**—That is, Jehovah, long before, had appointed these triumphs of Assyria, ordained that Assyria should lay waste the land of Judah, and he had announced it by his holy prophets. Compare Isa. vii, 17–20; viii, 7, 8; x, 5–11. **That thou shouldst be to lay waste**—This is thy preordained destiny, namely, to lay waste fenced cities into ruinous heaps. So far was he from working his conquests by his own power, that he was unconsciously working out the preordained plans of Jehovah.

**26. Therefore their inhabitants were of small power**—The margin renders, more literally, *were short of hand*—unable to resist the invader. So Sennacherib is informed that the dismay and confusion of the people he had conquered were not produced by his greatness, but by Jehovah's decree. **Grass... green herb**—Images of frailty and sudden decay. Compare Ps. xxxvii, 2; xc, 5; Isa. xl, 6. **Grass on the housetops**—Which is more perishable even than that of the field, for

grown up. **27** But <sup>h</sup>I know thy <sup>10</sup>abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me. **28** Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore <sup>i</sup>I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back <sup>k</sup>by the way by which thou camest. **29** And this shall be <sup>l</sup>a sign unto thee,

<sup>i</sup> Job 41. 2; Ezek. 29. 4; 38. 4; Amos 4. 2. — <sup>k</sup> Verses 33, 36, 37. — <sup>l</sup> 1 Sam. 2. 34; chap. 20. 8, 9; Isa. 7. 11, 14; Luke 2. 12.

it has no depth of soil, and quickly withers away. Compare Ps. cxxix, 6. **Blasted before it be grown up**—Blighted at the very outset, before it has become a stalk.

**27. Thy abode**—Rather, *thy sitting down*. The expressions sitting down, going out, coming in, are often used to denote all the actions of men. Ps. cxxxix, 2. Jehovah was fully acquainted with all the works and life of the impious Sennacherib.

**28. Thy tumult**—Rather, *thy arrogance*; a reference to his impious and haughty boasts. **Hook... bridle**—Allusion to the method of taming and controlling wild and restive animals. The Assyrians and Babylonians were also wont, as appears from the monuments, to lead their most distinguished prisoners by a rope or chain fastened in the lower lip, or the nose. **The way by which thou camest**—These words indicate an ignominious retreat. An invader who goes back by the same route he came usually goes back disappointed and humbled from having failed to carry out his plans.

**29. A sign unto thee**—Unto Hezekiah; for the oracle of the prophet here turns to comfort Judah and Je-



Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, and in the second year that which springeth of the same; and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof. **30** <sup>m</sup> And <sup>n</sup> the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall

<sup>m</sup> 2 Chron. 32. 22, 23. — <sup>n</sup> 11 Heb. *the escaping of the house of Judah that remaineth.*

rusalem. **Such things as grow of themselves**—The spontaneous growth which springs up from the leavings of the previous harvest. Compare Levit. xxv, 5, 11. **That which springeth**

**of the same**—Hebrew, שִׁחִיף, *sachish*,

which Fürst defines as the “*aftergrowth* out of the roots of stocks in the second year after sowing.” Strabo (xi, 4, 3) says of Albania, “In many places the ground, which has once been sown, produces two or three crops, the first of which is even fiftyfold, and that without a fallow.” The same is true of various parts of Palestine. **The third year sow ye, and reap**—But if, as verse 35 implies, the Assyrian army was smitten soon after this prophecy of Isaiah, why should they wait till *the third year* to cultivate the soil? Some say that **this year** was a sabbatical year, and **the second year** the year of jubilee, during both of which, according to the law, (Levit. xxv, 4, 11,) no sowing or reaping was allowed. This supposition may be true, but it seems to us far more simple and satisfactory to understand *this year* as that of Sennacherib's invasion, which was now near its close, but during which the Jews had been obliged to eat **such things as grow of themselves**; the next, or *second year*, came so soon after the retreat of the Assyrians, and found the land in so unsettled a state, that there could be no cultivation of the soil that year; and so it was not till *the third year* that they could *sow and reap*. And all this, as it came to pass, was to be a **sign** to Hezekiah and his people of their miraculous deliverance from Assyria. So the *sign* in this case was not to be a *prophecy* or *pledge* of any thing yet future, as that the Assyrians would retreat the third year, for when

yet again take “*root downward*, and bear fruit upward.” **31** For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and <sup>12</sup> they that escape out of mount Zion: <sup>o</sup> the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this. **32** Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall

<sup>n</sup> Psalm 80, 9. — <sup>12</sup> Hebrew, *the escaping.*  
<sup>o</sup> Isaiah 9, 7; 37, 22.

that year came, and long before, the Assyrians had retreated; but the *sign* was of the nature of a suggestive *memorial*—a proof or testimonial of the Divine interposition in their behalf.

**30. The remnant . . . of Judah**—Those who witness the *sign* just mentioned, having been delivered from the hand of Assyria. There is here a reference to the remnant for whom the king had asked Isaiah to pray. Ver. 4. **Yet again take root**—Literally, *add root*; that is, strike out new roots, and thereby take firmer hold **downward** into the soil. **Bear fruit upward**—Not only striking its roots deep in the earth, but its upspringing boughs yielding bountiful harvests. The general sense of this verse is, that Judah shall survive and vigorously flourish.

**31. For**—The blessings of Judah mentioned above are based on still deeper reasons. **Out of Jerusalem . . . out of mount Zion**—This holy city and this sacred mountain were the divinely chosen centre of the kingdom of God. From it were to proceed the evangelizing forces of the Messianic age, (Isa. ii, 3,) so that Jerusalem and Zion were ever to be associated with the holiest communion and noblest hopes of the saints of God. Heb. xii, 22. **A remnant**—The “remnant according to the election of grace” (Rom. xi, 5) who were to form the nucleus around which all the elect of Jehovah out of every nation should be gathered, and by the eternal covenant “have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” Eph. ii, 18. **The zeal of the Lord . . . shall do this**—So closes the Messianic prophecy of Isa. ix, 1-7; this fact favours the Messianic reference of this verse. *The zeal of the Lord*, is his jealous care for his people, (Zech. i, 14,) his profound interest in their welfare, as manifested in the entire history of the chosen race.

not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a bank against it.

**33** By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord.

**34** For <sup>p</sup>I will defend this city, to save it, for mine own sake, and <sup>q</sup>for my servant David's sake.

<sup>p</sup> Chapter 20. 6.—<sup>q</sup> 1 Kings 11. 12, 13.

**32. Therefore**—In view of this decreed permanency of Judah. **He shall not come**—The different expressions here used indicate Sennacherib's total failure to injure Jerusalem. "The four clauses," says Keil, "stand in a graduated relation to one another—not to take, not even to shoot at and attack, yea, not even to besiege, the city, will he come."

**33. By the way that he came**—See note on verse 28.

**SMITING AND FLIGHT OF THE ASSYRIANS—SENNACHERIB'S DEATH, 35–37.**

**That night**—Apparently the night that succeeded the day on which Isaiah sent his oracle to Hezekiah. **The angel of the Lord went out**—A supernatural minister of Jehovah's will, as the one whom, in David's time, Jehovah sent to scatter deadly pestilence upon Israel. 2 Sam. xxiv, 15, 16, notes. Josephus says, that in this case God sent upon the Assyrian army a *pestilential plague*, (*λοιμικὴν νόσον*), and some interpreters assume that *the angel of the Lord* is a Hebraism for a destructive pestilence. It is very possible that the angel made use of plague or pestilence in his work of destruction, but there is no need of confounding the angel with the plague. There is no more improbability in Jehovah's using superhuman beings than the Assyrian army to execute his judgments, and the numbers slain on this occasion clearly evidence a preternatural stroke of Divine vengeance. **Smote in the camp of the Assyrians**—"Where this overthrow took place, whether before Jerusalem, or at Libnah, or at some intervening point, has been disputed, and cannot be determined, in the absence of all data, monumental or historical. Throughout the sacred nar-

**35** And <sup>r</sup>it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses.

**36** So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at <sup>s</sup>Nineveh. **37** And it came

<sup>r</sup> 2 Chron. 32. 21; Isa. 37. 36.—<sup>s</sup> Gen. 10. 11.

ative it seems to be intentionally left uncertain whether Jerusalem was besieged at all—whether Sennacherib, in person, ever came before it; whether his army was divided or united when the stroke befel them, and also what proportion of the host escaped. It is enough to know that one hundred and eighty-five thousand men perished in a single night."—*Alexander*. **When they arose**—When the survivors arose. **All dead corpses**—The one hundred and eighty-five thousand had perished while asleep. It is interesting in this connexion to note that this preternatural stroke against the Assyrian army is also recorded in legendary form in profane history. Herodotus relates (ii, 141): "As the two armies [Egyptian and Assyrian] lay opposite one another, there came in the night a multitude of field mice which devoured all the quivers and bowstrings of the enemy, [Assyrians,] and ate the thongs by which they managed their shields. Next morning they commenced their flight, and great multitudes fell, as they had no arms with which to defend themselves."

**36. Sennacherib . . . departed**—For Jehovah had put his hook in his nose, (verse 28,) and led him back, like a strayed bull, to the place whence he had broken loose. **Returned, and dwelt at Nineveh**—"The murder of the disgraced Sennacherib 'within fifty-five days' of his return to Nineveh, seems to be an invention of the Alexandrian Jew who wrote the Book of Tobit, (i, 21.) The total destruction of the empire in consequence of the blow, is an exaggeration of Josephus, (*Antiquities*, x, 2, 2,) rashly credited by some moderns. Sennacherib did not die till seventeen years after this misfortune; and the empire suffered so little that

to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that 'Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons "smote

2 Chron. 32. 21.—u Verse 7.

we find Esar-haddon, a few years later, in full possession of all the territory that any king before him had ever held, ruling from Babylonia to Egypt. Even Sennacherib himself was not prevented by his calamity from undertaking important wars during the latter part of his reign."—RAWLINSON, *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii, p. 169.

37. **Nisroch**—The rank and character of this god in the Assyrian pantheon is not yet determined. Gesenius suggests that the word comes from the Hebrew root נִשָּׁר, *eagle*; and Layard

proposes to identify Nisroch with the eagle-headed human figure, which is



one of the most prominent on the earliest Assyrian monuments. Keil says, "the eagle was worshipped as a god by the Arabs, was regarded as sacred to Melkarth by the Phenicians, and, according to a statement of Philo, (that Zoroaster taught that the supreme deity was represented with an eagle's head,) was also a symbol of Ormuzd among the Persians; consequently Movers regards Nisroch as the supreme deity of the Assyrians. It is not improbable that it was also connected with the constellation of the eagle." But all the above suppositions concern-

him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of <sup>12</sup>Armenia. And 'Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

13 Heb. *Ararat*.—v Ezra 4. 2.

ing the Assyrian deity are largely conjectural. **Adrammelech** was the name of one of the gods of Sepharvaim, (see chap. xvii, 31, note,) and **Sharezer** was doubtless the name of some other deity. It was a common and widespread custom in the East to name princes after the gods. The following summary of Rawlinson, gathered from the monuments and other sources, is the best commentary on this verse: "Our various sources of information make it clear that Sennacherib had a large family of sons. Adrammelech and Sharezer, anxious to obtain the throne for themselves, plotted against the life of their father, and having slain him in a temple as he was worshipping, proceeded further to remove their brother Nergilus, who claimed the crown and wore it for a brief space after Sennacherib's death. Having murdered him, they expected to obtain the throne without further difficulty; but **Esarhaddon**, who at the time commanded the army which watched the Armenian frontier, now came forward, assumed the title of king, and prepared to march upon Nineveh. It was winter, and the inclemency of the weather precluded immediate movement. For some months, probably, the two assassins were recognised as monarchs at the capital, while the northern army regarded Esar-haddon as the rightful successor of his father. Thus died the great Sennacherib, a victim to the ambition of his sons. Esar-haddon's inscriptions show that he was engaged for some time after his accession in a war with his half-brothers, who, at the head of a large body of troops, disputed his right to the crown. According to Abydenus, Adrammelech fell in the battle; but better authorities state that both he and his brother, Sharezer, escaped into Armenia, where they were kindly treated by the reigning monarch, who gave them lands, which long continued in the possession of their posterity."—*Anc. Mon.*, vol. ii, pp. 185, ff.

## CHAPTER XX.

**I**N those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, 'Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. **2** Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed

<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 32. 24, &c.; Isa. 38. 1, &c.—1 Heb. *Give charge concerning thine house*; 2 Sam. 1. 23.

## CHAPTER XX.

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY,  
1-7.

**1. In . . . days**—About the time of the first Assyrian invasion, for Hezekiah reigned twenty-nine years in all, and lived fifteen after this sickness, so that, according to biblical data, his sickness must have occurred in the fourteenth year of his reign. Compare verse 6 with chap. xviii, 2, 13, and note on ver. 12. **Sick unto death**—Sick with a disease intrinsically fatal, unless miracle intervened. **Set thine house in order**—Settle up all thy worldly affairs, make the final arrangement and disposition of thy household matters. Compare 2 Sam. xvii, 23. Some explain it, Make thy last will, and give orders respecting thy successor. This, however, would only be a part of the household affairs of a dying king. In homiletics these words are often explained as a charge to prepare spiritually for death and the judgment beyond. **Thou shalt die, and not live**—Literally, *Dying art thou, and thou wilt not live*. These words are not an irreversible decree that he should die from that sickness, but an announcement, which, like Jonah's proclamation to the Ninevites, (Jonah iii, 4, 10,) was revoked and changed by reason of the humiliation and prayers of the king. It was God's decree, through ordinary natural law, reversible only by special interposition.

**2. Turned his face to the wall**—

Towards the wall of his room, away from all present, so as not to be confused by the sight of men. This act was "not merely to collect his thoughts, or to conceal his tears, but as a natural expression of strong feeling. As Ahab turned his face towards the wall in an-

unto the LORD, saying, **3** I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is good in thy sight*. And Hezekiah wept <sup>2</sup>sore. **4** And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle <sup>3</sup>court, that the word of the

<sup>b</sup> Neh. 13. 23.—<sup>c</sup> Gen. 17. 1; 1 Kings 3. 6.—<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *with a great weeping*.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *city*.

ger, (1 Kings xxi, 4,) so Hezekiah does the same in grief."—*Alexander*.

**3. I have walked before thee in truth**—He appeals to his piety and zeal for Jehovah, as evinced by his destruction of idolatry and trust in God, which were matters of record. Compare chap. xviii, 3-7. This language of the king is not to be regarded as self-praise. "Hezekiah stood in the economy of the Old Testament, that is, in the economy of legal righteousness; the entire revelation of the Old Testament is concentrated in the Law of Moses, as that of the New Testament is concentrated in the Gospel; so that to walk according to this law is not to be morally pure and free from sin, but to serve Jehovah as the only God, to fear him, to trust him, and to love him with all the heart. Hezekiah could say all this without pharisaical self-praise, just as well as Paul could say, without self-righteousness, 'I have fought a good fight; I have kept the faith.'"—*Bähr*. **Wept sore**—Wept greatly, or violently. Josephus says, he was afflicted because he had no heir to succeed him in the kingdom. Such a fact may have increased his grief, for it appears from verse 6, compared with chap. xxi, 1, that his son and successor, Manasseh, was born three years after this; but his chief agony seems to have been that he was about to be cut off in the midst of life, and such a calamity was looked upon as a stroke of Divine anger, and evidence of great wickedness. See Job xv, 32; xxii, 16; Psal. lv, 23; Prov. x, 27; Eccles. vii, 17. It is easy to see, then, why Hezekiah appeals so earnestly to his righteous acts. It is not in self-praise, but in self-vindication.

**4. The middle court**—So the *Keri* and the ancient versions; but the *Ke*

LORD came to him, saying, **5** Turn again, and tell Hezekiah <sup>a</sup>the captain of my people, thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, <sup>e</sup>"I have heard thy prayer, I have seen <sup>f</sup>thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. **6** And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and <sup>g</sup>"I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. **7** And <sup>h</sup>Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered.

**8** And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah,

<sup>d</sup> 1 Sam. 9. 16; 10. 1.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 19. 20; Psa. 65. 2.—<sup>f</sup> Psa. 39. 12; 56. 8.—<sup>g</sup> Chap. 19. 34.—<sup>h</sup> Isa. 38. 21.

*this* seems to be the more ancient reading, *the middle of the city*, that is, the central part of Jerusalem. So this **word of the Lord came to him** soon after he had left the king's presence.

**5. I will heal thee**—This change from the former announcement, that he should not live, (verse 1,) shows that that announcement was not irrevocable but conditional. **On the third day thou shalt go up**—This would be to the king a pledge and token of Divine interposition, and place beyond doubt the miraculous character of his cure.

**6. I will add unto thy days fifteen years**—A remarkable announcement, and of doubtful worth to Hezekiah. These additional years would not yet make him an old man, and most of them would be too apt to be spent in carnal security. And they produced an heir whose life and reign were a calamity to the kingdom. **Out of the hand of the king of Assyria**—This clearly indicates that these events occurred at the time of the Assyrian invasion. See note on verse 12.

**7. A lump of figs**—Figs pressed together into a mass or poultice. The use of figs in the cure of boils or ulcers is attested by several ancient writers. Dioscorides says, they "disperse tumors," and Pliny, they "open ulcers." **The boil**—שֶׁהָיָה, a burning sore, an inflamed ulcer. In Hezekiah's case, it was very probably a carbuncle. **He recovered**—That is, at the end of three days; but previous to his recovery

<sup>i</sup> What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the LORD the third day? **9** And Isaiah said, <sup>j</sup>"This sign shalt thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? **10** And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. **11** And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and <sup>k</sup>he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the <sup>l</sup>dial of Ahaz.

<sup>i</sup> See Judges 6. 17, 37, 39; Isa. 7. 11, 14; 38. 22.—<sup>j</sup> See Isa. 38. 7, 8.—<sup>k</sup> See Josh. 10. 12, 14; Isa. 38. 8.—<sup>l</sup> Heb. *degrees*.

ery he asked and received a marvellous sign of Divine interposition. See verses 8–11. In Isa. xxxviii, 9–20, we have a psalm of thanksgiving which Hezekian sang to the Lord at his recovery.

#### THE SIGN ON THE DIAL OF AHAZ, 8–11.

**8. What shall be the sign**—He cannot wait three days; he must have a *sign* immediately, for his emotion and anxiety are great.

**9. Shall the shadow go forward**—A more accurate rendering of the Hebrew is that of Keil: *The shadow has advanced ten degrees; if it should return ten degrees*. This concise and idiomatic Hebrew might thus be paraphrased: The shadow has now advanced ten degrees; if it go back ten degrees, would that be a convincing sign to thee? Hezekiah's answer in the next verse seems, however, to show that Isaiah had put it to him to decide whether the sign should be an advance or return of ten degrees, and so favours the common version.

**11. The prophet cried... Lord**—So this sign was granted in answer to a *prophet's* prayer. **He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz**—The Hebrew word for *dial* is the same as that rendered *degrees*, מַעְלֵוֹת, and means properly *steps*, or *ascents*; but is here evidently used of something that marked the course of the sun, (compare parallel

passage, Isa. xxxviii, 8; it is, perhaps, best rendered *degrees*, and the passage may be literally translated thus: *He turned the shadow in the degrees which it went down, in Ahaz's degrees, backward ten degrees.*

Various have been the attempts to explain this *dial of Ahaz*, but from our lack of any certain knowledge of its size and form, all the explanations that have been offered are at best only so many more or less plausible hypotheses. 1.) Some think that the *degrees* were literally the *ascents or steps* of some stairway connected with the royal palace, and the *shadow* was that of some pillar, or obelisk, which fell on a greater or less number of steps, according to the advance of the sun in the heavens. 2.) The rabbies say, that the dial was a concave hemisphere, in which twenty-eight lines were marked, and that the shadow which fell on these lines or degrees was caused by a little globe set in the midst of the concave surface. 3.) Dr. A. Clarke supposed that this dial consisted of eleven steps placed parallel to the horizon, with a perpendicular gnomon fixed in the upper step, which step was placed exactly north and south, and formed the meridian line. 4.) A dial has been discovered near Delhi, in India, which seems to have been designed for an observatory as



well as a dial. It is thus described by Kitto: It is a rectangled hexangle, whose hypotenuse is a staircase, apparently parallel to the axis of the earth, and bisects a zone or coping of a wall, which wall connects the two terminating towers right and left. The coping itself is circular, and accurately

graduated to mark, by the shadow of the gnomon above, the sun's progress before and after noon; for when the sun is in the zenith he shines directly on the staircase, and the shadow falls beyond the coping. A flat surface on the top of the staircase, and a gnomon, fitted the building for the purposes of an observatory. 5.) Lয়ারঁ supposes that the dial of Ahaz was a present to that king from Tiglath-pileser, and that in form it resembled the ancient tower of Belus, which was, perhaps, erected partly for astronomical purposes. Whatever its *form*, this account of its *origin* is probably correct. Herodotus (ii, 109) informs us that the sun-dial (πóλος) and the gnomon were inventions of the Babylonians, and Ahaz probably introduced it into Jerusalem at the same time he did the Assyrian altar. Ch. xvi, 10, note. Hence it would very naturally be called *the dial of Ahaz*.

The theories put forth to explain the manner in which *he brought the shadow ten degrees backwards* have also been various. Some have affirmed that the miracle was wrought by turning the earth backward in its axial revolution. So stupendous a miracle, however, would in this case have seemed too much like "leaping over the house to unbar the little gate." Others exclude any real miracle by explaining it as a case of refraction of the solar light. Romauld, prior of the cloister of Metz, observed on March 27, 1703, that a cloud in the higher regions of the atmosphere caused such refraction as to make his dial deviate an hour and a half. A writer in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, (vol. xv, p. 286,) explains the turning back of the shadow as caused by an eclipse of the sun, which occurred Jan. 11, 689 B. C., and which time he accordingly assigns as the date of this event. He supposes that the dial of Ahaz was a flight of steps mounting from north to south at an angle of  $34^{\circ}$ , which is the angle of the sun's elevation at Jerusalem at noon during the winter solstice. Thus the sun at noon would throw a shadow which would just tip the top step, and if at this moment the moon passed over the upper limb of the sun, it would

**12** At that time <sup>6</sup>Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Heze-

*m Isa. 39. 1, &c.—5 Or, Merodach-baladan.*

have caused the shadow to go backwards on the steps. But whatever the precise nature of the phenomenon, it is clear from the Scripture that it was given as a miraculous sign. Divine power and wisdom may have used some natural *media* in its production, but it is by no means necessary to seek or to assume such *media*. Hezekiah was allowed to choose whether the shadow should *go down*, or *return ten degrees*, and surely God might have brought the shadow *ten degrees backwards* by a purely miraculous refraction of those rays only which fell upon the dial. {It seems, perhaps, the most simple way to suppose that Divine power either threw a back shade on the dial, visible to the eye, or wrought subjectively upon the optic sense, so as to make it conceive a back shade, substituting conception for perception.}

#### THE BABYLONIAN EMBASSY, AND THE PROPHECY OF THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY, 12-19.

**12. At that time**—Soon after his recovery. It seems from 2 Chron. xxxii, 31, that the "princes of Babylon" had heard of "the wonder that was done in the land," and sent to inquire about it. If the dial were a Babylonian invention, (see note on verse 11,) the men of Babylon might naturally be interested in the wonderful sign that had been given in connexion with it. **Berodach-baladan**—Better written, as in Isa. xxxix, 1, *Merodach*. This king of Babylon was for a long time the great champion of Babylonian independence, and the head of the popular party in that country which long resisted the aggressions of Assyria. His name often occurs on the Assyrian monuments, from which it appears that he was twice defeated and driven from Babylon, once by Sargon, and again by Sennacherib. So unsettled are the principal authorities respecting the chronology of his rule at Babylon, that it seems impossible at

kiah: for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. **13** And <sup>6</sup>Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and showed then

*n 2 Chronicles 32. 27, 31.*

present to decide, from <sup>6</sup>times aside from the Scriptures, the exact date of his sending this embassy to Hezekiah. The Scriptures, however, clearly make it synchronize with Sennacherib's first invasion of Palestine, (see ver. 1, note,) and until more certain and controlling evidence is gathered from the monuments, or from some other source, we prefer to adhere to this opinion. The absence of Sennacherib from his capital may have furnished an occasion for Merodach to seek an alliance with Judea, and perhaps also with Egypt, to resist the Assyrian power. And these very efforts of Babylonia to form a great league against Assyria may have caused Sennacherib to content himself for the time with Hezekiah's silver and gold, (chap. xviii, 14,) and to return at once and vanquish Merodach-baladan. Afterwards, according to our note on chap. xviii, 17, Sennacherib made a second campaign westward, presuming to complete the conquest of Judea and Egypt. It should here be noted that, as we have elsewhere shown, the sacred writers do not always record events with reference to their chronological sequence, and therefore the placing of this account of Hezekiah's sickness and of this embassy after that of Sennacherib's retreat is no certain evidence as to the order of the events. **Letters and a present**—According to Josephus, Merodach wished to form an alliance with Hezekiah, and these letters and the present were doubtless to prepare the way. **For he had heard**—Not only that he had been sick, but also that he had been miraculously saved, and that his dial had given a miraculous sign. 2 Chron. xxxii, 31.

**13. Hezekiah hearkened unto them**—Many manuscripts and versions here read, *was glad of them*, or *rejoiced over them*, (יִשְׂמַח עֲלֵיהֶם,) as in Isa. xxxix, 2; but this is no sufficient proof that our text is corrupt. שָׁמַע is, indeed, seldom construed with עַל, but

all the house of his <sup>6</sup>precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and *all* the house of his <sup>7</sup>armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah showed them not. **14** Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon. **15** And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Heze-

<sup>6</sup> Or, *spicery*.—<sup>7</sup> Or, *jewels*. Heb. *vessels*.  
—<sup>o</sup> Verse 13.—<sup>p</sup> Chapter 24. 13; 25. 13; Jer-

examples are to be found in chapter xxii, 13, and Gen. xli, 15. The king *hearkened* unto the proposal to form an alliance with Merodach-baladan; and to convince them that he was not so feeble and destitute of resources as the king of Assyria might pretend, he showed them his treasures. **House of his precious things**—Better, as the margin, *house of spicery, or spice house*. So the word is rendered at Gen. xxxvii, 25. Spices were regarded as very precious things. **The spices**—Rather, *the aromatics, or perfumes*; all sorts of fragrant plants or spices which create a pleasant smell. **The precious ointment**—"Not fine olive-oil," says Keil, "but, according to the rabbies and Movers, the valuable balsam oil which was obtained in the royal gardens; for olive oil, which was obtained in all Judea, was not stored in the treasure-chambers along with the gold, silver, and perfumes, but in special storehouses." 1 Chron. xxvii, 28. **House of his armour**—The armory, or arsenal. **In all his dominion**—He made known to them the whole extent of his resources, whether of wealth, luxuries, or power. Those expositors who understand this embassy to have visited Hezekiah after the Assyrian invasion, and after Sennacherib had taken away all the silver of the temple and the palace, (chap. xviii, 15,) are put to it to account for all those treasures of gold and silver and precious things yet in possession of the Jewish king. They argue that Sennacherib took only silver and gold, not spices or arms, and that Hezekiah preferred to strip

kiah answered, "All *the things* that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not showed them. **16** And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord. **17** Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, <sup>9</sup>shall be carried unto Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. **18** And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, <sup>10</sup>shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the

emiah 27. 21, 22; 52. 17.—<sup>q</sup> Chapter 21. 12; 2 Chronicles 33. 11.

the doors and pillars of the temple for gold and silver, rather than give up that which was concealed in his treasures. They also suppose that the treasury of Jerusalem had been replenished by the gifts mentioned in 2 Chron. xxxii, 23. But if, as we have assumed, (verse 12, note,) this embassy came before Hezekiah had given all his silver and gold to Sennacherib, this accumulation of treasure is the more easily accounted for.

**14. From a far country**—This thought seems to have flattered his vanity and pride. He must needs be great who receives ambassadors from such a *far country* as **Babylon**.

**17. Shall be carried unto Babylon**—This seems to have been the first explicit prophecy of this great woe of Judah, though Micah's (iv, 10) prediction of the same event must have been nearly contemporary. The prophecy is especially remarkable, since Babylon was at this time an inferior power, little more than a dependency of Assyria, whose leading men had risen in rebellion; and there was far more probability that Judah would be carried into exile either by the king of Assyria or by the king of Egypt, which two at the time seemed to divide the empire of the world between them.

**18. Thy sons**—Thy descendants. For the fulfilment of this prophecy, see chap. xxiv, 11-16; xxv, 1-21. **They shall be eunuchs**—They shall serve the king of Babylon in all those offices in which *eunuchs* were accustomed to serve. The word need not be pressed in its most literal sense to sig-

king of Babylon. **19** Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. And he said, <sup>s</sup>*Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?*"

**20** "And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, are they

<sup>r</sup> 1 Sam. 3. 18; Job 1. 21; Psa. 39. 9.—8 Or, *shall there not be peace and truth, &c.*

nify that *all* the Jewish captives who thus served would be castrated, for many would serve, like Daniel and his companions, (Dan. i. 3-7,) who were not eunuchs in the stricter sense.

**19. Good is the word of the Lord**—A pious expression of submission to the Divine judgment. Compare the similar language of Eli. 1 Sam. iii. 18, and of Shimei, 1 Kings ii. 38. "He calls that *good*," says Le Clerc, "in which it is right to acquiesce, as having proceeded from Him who does nothing but what is not only most just, but tempered with the greatest goodness, even when he inflicts punishment." **If peace and truth be in my days**—He can regard it as nothing but pure goodness and special deference to himself that the judgment is not to come in his own time.

#### CONCLUSION OF HEZEKIAH'S REIGN, 20, 21.

**20. His might**—His valor or power in battle, by which he smote the Philistines. Chap. xviii. 8. **Pool...conduit**—The *pool* or cistern here mentioned is commonly identified with that still known as the "pool of Hezekiah," which lies within the modern city, some distance northeast of the Yaffa Gate. "The natives now call it *Birkel-el-Hamman*, from the circumstance that its waters are used to supply a bath in the vicinity. Its sides run towards the cardinal points. Its breadth at the north end is one hundred and forty-four feet; its length on the east side about two hundred and forty feet. The depth is not great. The bottom is rock levelled and covered with cement."—*Robinson*. This pool is supplied from the waters of the *Gihon*, or "upper pool," mentioned in

not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? **21** And "Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

**MANASSEH** <sup>a</sup>*was* twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned fifty and five years in Jeru-

<sup>s</sup> 2 Chron. 32. 32.—<sup>t</sup> Neh. 3. 16.—<sup>u</sup> 2 Chron. 32. 30.—<sup>v</sup> 2 Chron. 32. 33.—<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 33. 1, &c.

chap. xviii. 17, which are led by a *conduit*, or aqueduct, which passes under the city wall a little north of the Yaffa Gate. This is doubtless the same work as that referred to in 2 Chron. xxxii. 30: "Hezekiah also stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David." Thus the king brought water into the city by covering over the fountains about the city, and leading their waters by subterranean *conduits* inside the city walls. Compare 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4.

**21. Slept with his fathers**—According to 2 Chronicles xxxii. 33 he was "buried in the chiefest [rather, *the ascent*] of the sepulchres of the sons of David." Why he was not buried in the royal sepulchre does not appear; surely not because he was unworthy, for none equalled him in trusting Jehovah, (chap. xviii. 5,) "and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death." 2 Chron. xxxii. 33. Perhaps he had chosen this spot for his grave; or perhaps, as Thenius supposes, there was no more room in the royal tomb.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

##### REIGN OF MANASSEH, 1-18.

**1. Manasseh...twelve**—Hence it appears by comparison with chapter xx. 6, that he must have been born three years after Hezekiah's severe illness. See, also, note on chap. xx. 3. Perhaps he was the only son, or perhaps his older brothers had died. Though only *twelve years old*, he seems to have taken the kingdom into his own hand at that early age, and this fact may largely account for the wickedness of his reign. On the early

salem. And his mother's name *was* Hephzibah. **2** And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the LORD, <sup>b</sup> after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel. **3** For he built up again the high places <sup>c</sup> which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made a grove, <sup>d</sup> as did Ahab king of Israel; and <sup>e</sup> worshipped all <sup>f</sup> the host of heaven, and served them. **4** And <sup>g</sup> he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD said, <sup>h</sup> "In Jerusalem will I put my name." **5** And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of the LORD. **6** <sup>i</sup> And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed <sup>j</sup> times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke <sup>k</sup> him to anger. **7** And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon

his son, <sup>l</sup> "In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever: **8** <sup>m</sup> Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will observe to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them. **9** But they hearkened not: and Manasseh <sup>n</sup> seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel. **10** And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying, **11** <sup>o</sup> "Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations, <sup>p</sup> and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which *were* before him, and <sup>q</sup> hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: **12** Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Behold, I am bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both <sup>r</sup> his ears shall tingle. **13** And I

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 16. 3.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 18. 4.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 16. 82, 33.—<sup>e</sup> Deut. 4. 19; 17. 3; chap. 17. 16.—<sup>f</sup> Jer. 32. 34.—<sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 13; 1 Kings 8. 29; 9. 3.—<sup>h</sup> Lev. 18. 21; 20. 2; chap. 16. 3; 17. 17.—<sup>i</sup> Lev. 19. 26, 31; Deut. 18. 10, 11; chap. 17. 17.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 13; 1 Kings 8. 29; 9. 3; chap. 23. 27; Psa. 132. 13, 14; Jer. 32. 34.—<sup>l</sup> 2 Sam. 7. 10.—<sup>m</sup> Prov. 29. 12.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 23. 26, 27; 24. 3, 4; Jer. 15. 4.—<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings 21. 26.—<sup>p</sup> Verse 9.—<sup>q</sup> 1 Sam. 3. 11; Jer. 19. 3.

maturity of persons in the East, see note on chap. xviii, 2. **Fifty and five years**—The longest reign of any Jewish king. **Hephzibah**—The name means, *my delight is in her*; but notwithstanding this amiable name, and the piety of her husband, she seems to have illy trained her son.

**2. He did...after the abominations of the heathen**—Keil thinks that the young and inexperienced king was led into idolatry by such a godless party in the nation as is described in Isa. xxviii, 14; xxx, 9-11.

**3. As did Ahab**—See notes on 1 Kings xvi, 30-33. **Host of heaven**—See note on chap. xvii, 16.

**4. Built altars in the house of the Lord**—Erected altars to heathen gods even in the temple of Jehovah, as well as in the outer courts, as the next verse informs us.

**6. Made his son pass through the fire**—So he equalled the wicked Ahab in the horrible abomination. See chap. xvi, 3, note. **Observed times**—Rather, *practised magic*. The word *נִיּוּ*, thus rendered, is, according to Aben Ezra, from *נִיּוּ*, *a cloud*, and re-

fers to the practice of divination by observing the courses of the clouds. **Enchantments...familiar spirits...wizards**—Various forms of sorcery and witchcraft, all positively forbidden in the law. See on Deut. xviii, 9-12.

**7. A graven image of the grove**—Rather, *the image of the Asherah*; that is, the Asherah-pillar, or image, already mentioned in verse 3. (English version, incorrectly, "grove.") He refrained not even from setting up this abominable *image* in the very temple which had been consecrated to the pure worship of Jehovah.

**9. More evil than did the nations**—Because the worship of their own false gods by nations who knew not the true God, was far less condemnatory than for Israel, who had received so many revelations of Jehovah, to turn aside to the worship of idols.

**10. By his...prophets**—The prophets of this period are nowhere named.

**12. Ears shall tingle**—So amazed shall he be at the terrible tidings. Compare 1 Sam. iii, 11, note.

will stretch over Jerusalem 'the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man wipeth a dish*, <sup>1</sup>wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down. 14 And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; 15 Because they have done *that which was evil* in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day. 16 \* Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem <sup>2</sup>from one end to another; besides his sin wherewith he made Ju-

dah to sin, in doing *that which was evil* in the sight of the Lord. 17 Now 'the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?

18 And \* Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

19 \* Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. 20 And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the Lord, \*as his father Manasseh.

<sup>r</sup> See Isa. 34. 11; Lam. 2. 8; Amos 7. 7, 8.—  
<sup>1</sup> Heb. *he wipeth and turneth it upon the face thereof*.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 24. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *from mouth to mouth*.—<sup>t</sup> 2 Chron. 33. 11-19.—<sup>u</sup> 2 Chron. 33. 20.—<sup>v</sup> 2 Chron. 33. 21-23.—<sup>w</sup> Verse 2, &c.

13. **Line of Samaria... plummet of the house of Ahab**—The *line* is used in measuring, the *plummet* in levelling or squaring, and both are used here metaphorically as standards of Divine judgment. Jehovah will visit Jerusalem with the same measure of severity as he did *Samaria* and the *house of Ahab*; that is, he will destroy the city and exterminate its inhabitants. Compare chap. xvii. 6; x. 11. **As a man wipeth a dish**—A contemptuous simile. When one has finished using a dish he *wipes* it and *turns* it upside down; so Jehovah shall empty, and wipe out, and turn over, Jerusalem: that is, he shall utterly overthrow it, and leave it **upside down**, or literally, *upon its face*.

14. **The remnant of mine inheritance**—Judah and Benjamin, which alone remained as tribes and chief representatives of the chosen nation.

16. **Shed innocent blood**—Probably of those prophets (comp. verse 10) who reproved his sins and uttered the word of the Lord against him. Josephus says, "He barbarously slew all the righteous men that were among the Hebrews; nor would he spare the prophets, for he every day slew some of them, till Jerusalem was overflowed with blood." It was during the reign of Manasseh, according to Jewish tradition, that Isaiah was sawn asunder. Heb. xi. 37. **Besides his sin**—That is, especially, his abominable idolatry.

17. **The rest of the acts of Manasseh**—Besides what is here recorded of Manasseh, the parallel history in 2 Chron. xxxiii informs us, that as a judgment for his sins he was captured by Assyrian warriors, bound with fetters, and carried to Babylon. There he humbled himself before God, and, in answer to prayer, was restored to his kingdom, whereupon he removed the signs of his idolatry, and sacrificed to Jehovah. He also fortified Jerusalem and strengthened the various cities of Judah. See notes on that chapter.

18. **Garden of his own house**—A garden or field connected with his own private house, not the royal palace on Zion, but probably, as Keil supposes, his summer palace. The locality of this garden cannot now be determined, but it apparently took its name, **the garden of Uzza**, from some former owner, of whom we find elsewhere no certain trace. Cornelius à Lapidé suggests that it may be identical with *Perez-uzzah*, where Uzzah was smitten for attempting to steady the ark of God. 2 Sam. vi. 8.

#### REIGN OF AMON, 19-26.

19. **Two years**—The rabbies say, that the sons of idolatrous kings who succeeded their fathers seldom reigned more than *two years*, and Nadab, (1 Kings xv. 25,) Elah, (xvi. 8,) and Ahaziah, (xxii. 51,) are cited as instances. The site of **Jotbah** is unknown.

did. **21** And he walked in all the ways that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: **22** And he <sup>\*</sup>forsook the Lord God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the Lord. **23** <sup>y</sup> And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. **24** And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead. **25** Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah?* **26** And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

**c** 1 Kings 11. 33.—**y** 2 Chronicles 33. 24, 25.  
**z** Matt. 1. 10, *Josias*.

**23. The servants of Amon**—Probably his court-attendants. For what reason they conspired against him is at present only a matter of conjecture.

**24.** The fact stated in this verse, that the people of the land rose up against the conspirators and slew them, argues that Amon was not unpopular with the great body of the nation. Possibly the conspirators sought to establish a new dynasty in Judah, a movement not likely to meet with favour, and therefore the people hastened to place Josiah on the throne, though he was then only eight years old.

**26. In his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza**—That is, by the side of his father in the family tomb. See note on verse 18.

## CHAPTER XXII.

INTRODUCTION TO JOSIAH'S REIGN, 1, 2.

**1. Josiah**—A name forever honoured in Jewish history. **Eight years old**—Born when his father was sixteen years old. Compare chap. xxi, 19. On the early maturity of persons in the East, see note on chap. xviii, 2. **His mother** was probably queen-regent during the earlier years of his reign. **Boscath** is the same as *Bozkath* in the plain of Judah, apparently between Lachish and Egion, (Josh. xv, 39,) but its site has not been identified.

## CHAPTER XXII.

**JOSIAH** <sup>a</sup>was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of <sup>b</sup>Boscath. **2** And he did *that which was right* in the sight of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father, and <sup>c</sup>turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

**3** <sup>a</sup>And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the Lord, saying, **4** Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver which is <sup>c</sup>brought into

**a** 2 Chron. 34. 1.—**b** Josh. 15. 39.—**c** Deut. 5. 32.  
**d** 2 Chron. 34. 8, &c.—**e** Chap. 12. 4.

PREPARATIONS MADE TO REPAIR THE TEMPLE, 3-7.

**3. The eighteenth year of king Josiah**—This is a memorable date, and made especially prominent by the writer of Kings, because it was in this year that the book of the law was discovered, and the celebrated pass-over held. Hence he repeats the mention of this date in chap. xxiii, 23, and seems to fasten all his narrative upon it. But from the parallel history in 2 Chron. xxxiv, xxxv, we learn that in his eighth year Josiah "began to seek after the God of his father David," and in his twelfth year he began to destroy the idolatrous images not only in "Judah and Jerusalem," but also "in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali." Hence we conclude that various reforms and extensive destruction of images were commenced by Josiah before this *eighteenth year*, but after the discovery of the law the work was carried out with far greater zeal and thoroughness. **Shaphan... the scribe**—He was also the father of Ahikam, mentioned verses 12, 14. On the office and work of *scribe*, see note on 2 Sam. viii, 17.

**4. Hilkiah the high priest**—Son of Shallum and grandson of Zadok. 1 Chron. vi, 12, 13. His name is immortalized by his discovery of the book of the law. **Sum the silver**—Ascertain the *sum* or complete amount

the house of the LORD, which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people: **5** And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work, which *is* in the house of the LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, **6** Unto carpenters, and build-

ers, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. **7** Howbeit, there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.

**8** And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the

*f* Chap. 12. 9; *Psa.* 84. 10.—*1* Heb. *threshold*.  
*g* Chap. 12. 11, 12, 14.

*h* Chap. 12. 15.—*i* *Deut.* 31. 24, &c.: *2 Chron.* 34. 14, &c.

of the silver now on hand. **Which the keepers of the door have gathered**—The arrangement for receiving money was like that in the time of Jehoshaphat (chapter xii, 9–12,) when a chest was placed at the door of the temple into which the people put their contributions for repairing the house of the LORD; and “when they saw that there was much money in the chest, the king’s scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up in bags and told the money that was found in the house of the LORD.” *The keepers of the door* were Levites, (*1 Chron.* xxiii, 5,) sometimes priests. Chap. xii, 9.

**5. The doers of the work**—All that laboured in repairing the temple, both masters or superintendents and under-workmen. The former are designated as those **that have the oversight of the house**; the latter, those who are **in the house of the LORD**. This is more clearly stated in *2 Chron.* xxxiv, 10–13, where also the names of the masters or overseers are given. **To repair the . . . house**—For since the time of Jehoshaphat no repairing had been done, and the temple had suffered repeated spoliation. *Comp.* chap. xiv, 14; xvi, 8, 17, 18; xviii, 15, 16.

**7. No reckoning**—See chap. xii, 15.

DISCOVERY OF THE BOOK OF THE LAW,  
8–11.

**8. I have found the book of the law**—The traditional and most probable meaning is, that this was the same *book of the law* (or a true and complete copy of it) which Moses wrote and ordered the Levite-priests to deposit and keep in the side of the ark of God, (*Deut.* xxxi, 9, 24, 26)—the entire Pentateuch. Against this traditional belief and most obvious sense

of the words, the bare assumption that it was only our present book of Deuteronomy, or a digest of the laws of Moses, is destitute of any force. The statement in *2 Chron.* xxxiv, 14, that it was the *book of the law of Jehovah* by the hand of Moses, has led many to believe that it was the ancient autograph copy which came from the hand of the great lawgiver. This, Kitto thinks, was one reason why its discovery made such an extraordinary impression—“an impression which may in part, though still imperfectly, be understood by him who has been privileged to examine some one of the most ancient manuscripts of the Scriptures now existing; and whom the very oldness of the vellum, and the antique style of the writing, with the knowledge of the long ages through which its existence may be traced, seem to take back so much nearer to the time of the writer, and give a vividness to his impressions of ancient truth which no modern copy can impart.”

It is certainly possible, and, indeed, probable, that the original copy of the law might have existed in Josiah’s time, having been long concealed in some secret place of the temple. But it is not likely that this was the only copy of the law then in existence, and the finding of it by Hilkiah was not the discovery of something which had never before been heard of, and which had now, for the first time, come to light. We naturally infer from the course of the history that during the last great apostasy of more than half a century (from the beginning of Manasseh’s reign even up to this eighteenth year of Josiah—seventy-five years) the *book of the law* had been utterly neglected, and the knowledge of it existed only as a tra-

**LORD.** And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. **9** And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again, and said, Thy servants have <sup>2</sup>gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the **LORD**. **10** And Shaphan the scribe showed the king, say-

2 Heb. *melled*.—*k Abdon*,

dition among the better classes of the people. Copies probably existed here and there, especially among the prophets, but they were not generally known, and their owners may have been careful to keep their existence a secret.

—In what part of the temple the book was found is a question that cannot be answered. It had probably been concealed, during a period of apostasy and persecution, by some faithful priest, who feared that the growing wickedness and the impious sacrilege of his age might destroy the sacred treasure.

**10. The priest hath delivered me a book**—Shaphan had already read



ing, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. **11** And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes.

**12** And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and <sup>2</sup>Achbor the son of <sup>3</sup>Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and

2 Chron. 34. 20.—3 Or, *Micah*.

the book (verse 8) sufficiently, doubtless, to satisfy himself of its character and value, but he did not tell the king that it was the law of Moses; he spoke of it as a book, an ancient manuscript, worthy of attention, and then **read it before the king**. From this last expression we are not to understand that Shaphan read at that one time all the pentateuch to the king. Chronicles says, he read *in it*; that is, portions of it. From the impression the reading made upon the king, and from the language of the prophetess in verse 16, (comp. 2 Chron. xxxiv, 23,) it is commonly supposed that the scribe opened upon the latter portion of the book of Deuteronomy, especially chaps. xxviii-xxxi. And this would be very natural if the book were in the form of a scroll, and the scribe unrolled the last part first.

**11. Rent his clothes**—So sudden and profound was his grief and terror on fully realizing the extent and fearfulness of the nation's apostasy from the law of Jehovah.

THE ORACLE OF HULDAH THE PROPHETESS, 12-20.

**12. Hilkiah... Ahikam... Achbor... Shaphan... Asaiah**—A truly honourable and imposing delegation, and indicative of the king's profound earnestness and anxiety. Here was first the high priest: then *Ahikam*, who afterwards appears as the friend of Jeremiah, and father of the governor of the cities of Judah; (Jer. xxvi, 24; xl, 5;) then *Achbor*, whose eminence in the kingdom is shown further by the fact that his son Elnathan was one of Zedekiah's chief ministers; (Jer. xxvi, 22; xxxvi, 12;) then **Shaphan, the scribe**, who must now have been

Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, **13** Go ye, 'inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. **14** So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and A shbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the proph-

<sup>1</sup> Psa. 25. 14; Prov. 3. 6; Amos 3. 7. — *m* Deut. 29. 27; Dan. 9. 5, 7; Nah. 1. 6; Rom. 3. 19, 20. — *n* *Tikvath*, 2 Chron. 34. 22.

an old and venerable man to have a son so eminent in the kingdom as *Ahikam*; and, lastly, a servant of the king's named *Asahiah*, who seems, from his association with the other deputies, to have been some honourable officer.

**13. Inquire of the Lord for me**—He does not instruct them where to go, or say whether they shall *inquire* by urim or by the prophets. He assumes that they know better where to go than he. **Concerning the words of this book**—Not whether it were really the book of the law of Moses, and its words to be credited, for he had no doubt of this when he rent his clothes, (verses 11, 19,) but to know whether the words of the book are to be immediately fulfilled, and what he is to do and expect under the fearful state of things that has come upon the nation for its sins.

**14. Huldah the prophetess**—All we know of this celebrated woman is recorded here and in the parallel history of Chronicles. Even her husband and his ancestors are mentioned nowhere else. But this short narrative has immortalized her name, and her oracle on the occasion has given her a place above many of the prophets of Judah. The loftiness of her position is enhanced by the fact that the high priest and the king's most honourable ministers seek knowledge at her hand. In the bestowal of the Divine gift of the Spirit Jehovah is no respecter of persons or of sex, yet in the field of prophecy woman has appeared less frequently than man. Only two other women of the Old Testament bear the title of *prophetess*, Miriam,

etess, the wife of Shallum the son of <sup>a</sup> Tikvah, the son of <sup>a</sup> Harhas, keeper of the <sup>a</sup> wardrobe; now she dwelt in Jerusalem <sup>a</sup> in the college; and they communed with her. **15** And she said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell the man that sent you to me, **16** Thus saith the Lord, Behold, <sup>a</sup> I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read: **17** <sup>a</sup> Because they

<sup>4</sup> Or, *Hasrah*. — <sup>5</sup> Heb. *garments*. — <sup>6</sup> Or, *in the second part*. — <sup>a</sup> Deut. 29. 27; Dan. 9. 11-14. — <sup>p</sup> Deut. 29. 25-27.

the sister of Moses and Aaron, (Exod. xv, 20,) and Deborah, (Judges iv, 4;) but they seem not to have attained the spiritual elevation of Huldah. In the spirit of ecstasy they sang sacred songs, and aroused the people to enthusiasm after signal victories; but they did not prophesy in that loftier sphere of Divine authority which is expressed in "*Thus saith Jehovah*." Verses 15, 16. **The wardrobe**—Either of the king or of the priests. Compare chap. x, 22. **In the college**—This rendering seems to have been taken from the Targum of Jonathan, which reads, *house of instruction*, and probably originated in the supposition that Huldah had charge of a school of the prophets. The Hebrew is בְּמִשְׁנָה, *in the Mishna*, and is thus translated as a proper name in the Septuagint; but it means literally, *in the second*, and is so rendered in Zeph. i, 10, where it means the second part, or a later addition to the city. Thus the word designates the section or district of Jerusalem in which Huldah lived. This quarter of the city might have been called *the second* for various reasons now unknown to us. Josephus (*Ant.*, xv, 11, 5) speaks of *the other city* (ἡ ἄλλη πόλις) as of a well-known section of Jerusalem.

**15. Tell the man that sent you**—Verses 16-17 contain a prophecy of which every Israelite should be informed, and are communicated to the king as the representative of every man of his kingdom; verses 18-20 are particularly for the king alone.

**16. This place**—Jerusalem. **All the words of the book**—Chronicles

nave forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched. **18** But to <sup>a</sup>the king of Judah which sent you to inquire of the Lord, thus shall ye say to him, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, *As touching* the words which thou hast heard; **19** Because thine <sup>a</sup>heart was tender, and thou hast <sup>a</sup>humbled thyself before the Lord, when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become <sup>a</sup>a desolation and <sup>a</sup>a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard *thee*, saith the Lord. **20** Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou <sup>a</sup>shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this

place. And they brought the king word again.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

**A**ND <sup>a</sup>the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. **2** And the king went up into the house of the Lord, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, <sup>b</sup>both small and great: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant <sup>b</sup>which was found in the house of the Lord. **3** And the king <sup>c</sup>stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their* heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the cove-

<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 34. 25, &c. — <sup>r</sup> Psa. 51. 17; Isa. 57. 15. — <sup>s</sup> 1 Kings 21. 29. — <sup>t</sup> Lev. 26. 31, 32. — <sup>u</sup> Jer. 26. 6; 44. 22. — <sup>v</sup> Psa. 37. 37; Isa. 57. 1, 2. — <sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 34. 29, 30, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *from small even unto great.* — <sup>b</sup> Chapter 22. 8. — <sup>c</sup> Chapter 11. 14, 17; Ezra 10. 3; Jeremiah 50. 5; Hebrews 8. 8, 13; 12. 24; 13. 20.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GREAT REFORMATION UNDER JOSEPH, 1-25.

reads *all the curses*, from which it has naturally been inferred that *the words* of the law which had especially impressed the king were the curses which are announced in Leviticus xxvi, and the closing chapters of Deuteronomy, as sure to come in case of disobedience, upon the sinful nation. Compare note on verse 10.

**18. To the king of Judah**—What follows is solely for *the king*; the preceding part of the oracle was "to the man that sent you," (verse 15,) because it contained announcements which it concerned not only the king, but every other *man*, to hear.

**19. Thine heart was tender**—Yielding and impressible. **A desolation and a curse**—These words indicate that Leviticus xxvi (compare especially verses 31, 32) had also been read before the king.

**20. Gathered into thy grave in peace**—For although slain by the king of Egypt, he was brought to Jerusalem, and peacefully buried in his own family tomb, (chapter xxiii, 39, 40,) mourned by all the people. And he was spared the bitter woe of living to see **all the evil** which subsequently befel his people, and of which the law gave warning and the prophets spoke.

**1. The king sent**—Instructed by the law and by the prophetess, the king does not rest in security, feeling that the evil will not come in his day, but takes immediate measures to instruct the people in the law, and to destroy idolatry throughout the land.

**2. Priests . . . prophets . . . people**—All classes were thus represented. **Small and great**—All ranks as well as classes were present. No one was too great, no one too small, to be interested in the law of Jehovah. **He read**—Or caused to be read. The public reading was probably done by the Levites, priests, and prophets, and was done in various parts of the temple and its courts at the same time. **All the words of the book**—The entire law was read, and probably occupied several days.

**3. Stood by a pillar**—Rather, *by the pillar*: the same pillar by which the youthful Joash stood when the high priest Jehoiada made a covenant between the king and the people. See note on chap. xi, 14. **All the people stood to the covenant**—They en-

nant. **4** And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for <sup>d</sup>the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes

of them unto Beth-el. **5** And he <sup>e</sup>put down the <sup>3</sup>idolatrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burned incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the <sup>4</sup>planets, and to <sup>c</sup>all the host of heaven. **6** And he brought

<sup>d</sup> Chap. 21. 3, <sup>e</sup> —2 Heb. *caused to cease*.  
<sup>3</sup> Heb. *Chemarim*, Hos. 10. 5; Zeph. 1. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Or, *twelve signs, or, constellations*.  
<sup>e</sup> Chapter 21. 3.

tered into the covenant like the king, by taking upon themselves solemn vows and oaths to keep the commandments. Stanley remarks that it was "one of those national vows or covenants which were in the monarchy what the vows of individuals had been in the earlier stages of the nation."

#### 4. Priests of the second order—

Those who ranked next in order to the high priest. The great body of the priesthood were of this order, but some

among them were more distinguished than others. Compare chap. xxv, 13.

**Keepers of the door**—Levites who guarded the entrance to the temple, called *porters* in 1 Chron. xxiii, 5.

**All the vessels**—Such as altars, images, and symbols, that had been used in the false worship.

**Baal...grove...host of heaven**—See at chap. xxiii, 3-7.

**Burned them**—As the law commanded. Deut. vii, 5, 25; xii, 3.

**Fields of Kidron**—Probably at the upper part of the Kidron valley, and a little northeast of Jerusalem, where, according to Robinson, "the valley spreads

out into a basin of some breadth, which is tilled, and contains plantations of olive and other fruit trees." It was probably in the same spot that Asa

burned the Asherah idol of his mother. 1 Kings xv, 13.

**Carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el**—To signify that all this idolatry originated, not at

Jerusalem, but at Beth-el, where Jeroboam's false worship had been inaugurated, (1 Kings xii, 29,) and thence spread and opened the way for all

manner of idolatrous practices.

**5. Put down**—The margin is better, he *caused to cease*; he set them

aside by prohibiting their idolatrous service, and destroying all their places

of worship. **The idolatrous priests**

—*The chemarim*, (כִּמְרִים.) These are

mentioned again at Hosea x, 5, and Zeph. i, 4, where they seem to be the

priests of the calf-worship. Here they are described as those **whom the**

**kings of Judah had ordained to**

**burn incense in the high places**, and

are distinguished from the priests of Baal and other idolaters. Of the word

*chemarim*, over which there has been dispute, Fürst says: "The application

to idolatrous priests is obviously only a Hebrew peculiarity, since the Syriac

*chumero* denotes any priest; and it is a question how this designation is united

with the meaning of the stem. According to Kimchi, the idolatrous priest is so named from his gloomy, black

dress; or, from the Syriac meaning of the stem, *to mourn*, then, to be an

*ascetic*. But if a particular fundamental signification of the stem should be assumed for this noun, it would be appropriate

to take עֲמִיר=כֶּמֶר, (Arabic, *amar*, coluit deum,) and accordingly

כֶּמֶר would be a serving one, a *servant*,

like כֹּהֵן, *priest*, in its fundamental

meaning." **To the sun, and to the**

**moon**—The worship of Baal was really a worship of the sun and moon, for these luminaries were the real gods

represented by Baal and Ashtoreth. See note on Judges ii, 13.

**The planets**—מְקֻלֹת, synonymous with מְקֻרֹת of

Job xxxviii, 32, stands for the twelve signs or constellations of the zodiac,

which the ancients conceived of as so many stations of the sun in his course

through the heavens. "In Arabic the twelve stations are called twelve pal-

aces of the sun, and the zodiac is named the circle of palaces."—Fürst.

out the 'grove from the house of the Lord, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burned it at the brook Kidron, and stamped it small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. <sup>7</sup> And he brake down the houses <sup>a</sup> of the sodomites, that were by the house of the Lord, <sup>i</sup> where the women wove hangings for the grove. <sup>8</sup> And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high

places where the priests had burned incense, from <sup>k</sup> Geba to Beer-sheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that were in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. <sup>11</sup> Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, <sup>m</sup> but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. <sup>10</sup> And he defiled <sup>n</sup> Topheth, which is in the

<sup>f</sup> Chap. 21. 7. — <sup>g</sup> 2 Chron. 34. 4. — <sup>h</sup> 1 Kings 14. 24; 15. 12. — <sup>i</sup> Ezek. 16. 16. — <sup>j</sup> Heb. houses. — <sup>k</sup> 1 Kings 15. 22.

<sup>l</sup> See Ezekiel 44. 10-14. — <sup>m</sup> 1 Samuel 2. 36. — <sup>n</sup> Isaiah 30. 33; Jeremiah 7. 31; 19. 6, 11-13. — <sup>o</sup> Joshua 15. 8.

6. **Brought out the grove**—Rather, the *Asherah* image, mentioned in chap. xxi. 7. **Kidron**—See on ver. 4. **Graves of the children of the people**—That is, of the common people. See Jer. xxvi. 23. 2 Chronicles xxxiv. 4, says, "Upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them;" but that passage seems to refer to other images of *Asherah*, to which, however, many of the common people may have often sacrificed. The object of casting the powder, or dust, of these images on the graves may have been either to defile them as the graves of idolaters, or, what is more probable, to dishonour the dust of the idols.

7. **Sodomites**—See note on 1 Kings xiv. 24. These abominable prostitutes had grown so bold as to build their houses, or tents, by the house of the Lord, striking evidence of the fearful extent to which the nation had become corrupted. **The women**—The female prostitutes, who were devoted to the lewd rites of Ashtoreth. **Wove hangings**—Rather, *wove little tents*, or *houses for Asherah*. Keil calls them "tent-temples," and quotes Movers, who conjectures "that the women of Jerusalem gave themselves up, in honour of the goddess, in the tents of the sodomites which were pitched in the temple circle, on which account the money received for prostitution went to the temple treasury."

8. **Priests out of the cities of Judah**—Levitical priests who had been turned aside to the service of the high places. Josiah ordered them to come to Jerusalem, but, as the next verse shows, they were not allowed to min-

ister at the altar of the Lord. **Geba**...

**Beer-sheba**—The northern and southern limit of the territory occupied by Judah. *Geba* was situated about six miles northeast of Jerusalem, (see note on 1 Sam. xiii. 3,) and *Beer-sheba* fifty miles or more southwest. **High places of the gates**—Those located near the gates of the city, either outside or within. **The gate of Joshua and the gate of the city** cannot now be determined. The latter, from its being called so indefinitely *gate of the city*, would seem to be the most common entrance; the former was probably so called because **Joshua the governor** had his residence near it.

9. **Came not up to the altar**—That is, to minister thereat by burning incense or offering sacrifice. **But they did eat of the... bread**—So these priests were treated as the law prescribed for such as had some blemish or bodily defect. See Lev. xxi. 17-24.

10. **Defiled Topheth**—Probably by burning the bones of the priests who had offered human sacrifices there. Compare 2 Chron. xxxiv. 5. The word *Topheth* (usually with the article

תֹּפֶת־) occurs only in the Old Testament at the passages named in the margin, and designates the place in the valley of Hinnom, where human sacrifices were offered to **Molech**. Its derivation is uncertain. The rabbies say it is the same as *toph*, (תֶּף) a drum, and is applied to the place where human sacrifices were offered, because drums were beaten there to drown the cries of the victims. Fürst and others derive it from a root, תָּוַף, to burn, and

valley of the children of Hinnom, <sup>p</sup> that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. **11** And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to

the sun, at the entering in of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the <sup>e</sup>chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burned the chariots of the sun with fire. **12** And the altars

<sup>p</sup> Lev. 18. 21; Deut. 18. 10; Ezek. 23.

37, 39.—6 Or, *eunuch*, or, *officer*.

understand it as *an altar-place* for the burning of dead bodies. It is translated *tabret* in Job xvii, 7, but most interpreters agree that it there means *spittle*, or *abhorrence*, and is also, as a proper name, to be explained in a similar sense, and applied to the spot where human sacrifices were offered, because it was a place of abhorrence—a thing to be spit at. **The valley of the children of Hinnom**—This has been usually identified with the valley on the west and south sides of Jerusalem; but Jeremiah says (xix, 2) it was “by the entry of the east gate, (Heb. *potter's gate*;) and Dr. Bonar (*Smith's Bib. Dict.*) says, “Hinnom, by old writers, western and eastern, is always placed *east* of the city, and corresponds to what we call the mouth of the Tyropœon, along the southern bed and banks of the Kedron, and was reckoned to be somewhere between the potter's field and the fuller's pool.” And Captain Wilson and M. Ganneau have concluded, from minute examinations, that the Kedron and Hinnom valleys are identical. But see Note on Josh. xv, 8.

**11. Took away the horses**—Just as he “put down the idolatrous priests.” Verse 5. The Hebrew word is in each place the same: he made them cease from the work they had been performing. **Kings of Judah**—Especially Ahaz, Manasseh, and Amon. **Had given to the sun**—Had consecrated them as sacred to the sun, and to be used in drawing the chariots of the sun in processions which moved forth to worship that luminary. The rabbies say, they drove to meet the rising sun; but the sun was probably conceived of as a chariot drawn through the heavens, and this idea was symbolized in his worship by sacred chariots drawn by horses sacred to the sun. The law had forbidden the king to multiply horses, (Deut. xvii, 16;) but the kings of Judah had even gone so far as to

devote them to the idolatrous worship of the sun. The horse was regarded as sacred to the sun by many ancient nations, and Herodotus says of the Magesætæ, (i, 216,) “The only god they worship is the sun, and to him they offer the horse in sacrifice.” There is no evidence that the kings of Judah offered the horse in sacrifice; and while Josiah *burned the chariots*, he merely *took away the horses*, and probably turned them to other and better services. **At the entering in of the house**—These horses were ordinarily kept near by the entrance to the temple. The Hebrew is, *from the entering*, (כְּנִסְתָּה) and is most naturally construed

with *took away*; that is, he removed the horses *from* the entrance of the temple.

**By the chamber of Nathan-melech**—The cell or room, possibly one of the side chambers mentioned in 1 Kings vi, 5, which Nathan-melech occupied, and which was close *by* (אֵל, *at or in*) the stable in which the sacred horses were kept. Keil thinks that the chamber itself was arranged and used for a stable. This **chamberlain** (סָרִיס, *eunuch*)

was an officer who had charge of the horses. **Which was in the suburbs**—The relative *which* refers to *chamber*.

The eunuch's chamber was בְּפָרְוִים, *in the Parvurs*. The Hebrew word is probably identical with *Parbar* of 1 Chron. xxvi, 18, which was a spot apparently west of the temple, and inside of the gate that opened into the court at which two Levite porters were stationed. All the ancient versions render it as a proper name, except the Targum, which is followed by the translators of our version—*in the suburbs*. “Of the six watchmen who were posted at the west side, four had posts assigned them on the street, (English version, *causeway*;) that is, at the gate which led to the street, and only two at the

that *were* <sup>a</sup>on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which <sup>b</sup>Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, did the king beat down, and <sup>c</sup>brake *them* down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. **13** And the high places that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of <sup>d</sup>the mount of corruption, which <sup>e</sup>Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king

<sup>a</sup> See Jer. 19, 13; Zeph. 1, 5. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 21, 5. — <sup>c</sup> Or, *ran from thence*. — <sup>d</sup> That is, *the mount of Olives*.

Parbar. The latter must, therefore, have been inside the court, otherwise it could not have been left to the weaker guard."—*Bähr*. The meaning and etymology of the word are uncertain.

**12. On the top**—On the *roof*, which in many Oriental houses is a large, flat, solid surface, much frequented by the people, especially in the cool of the day. **Upper chamber of Ahaz**—Whether this was in the temple, or in some out-building of the court, cannot be determined; it was called after Ahaz, probably because he built it and used it for observing the stars and burning incense to the host of heaven. Compare Jer. xix, 13; Zeph. i, 5; and note on chap. xvii, 16. For this same purpose, also, had the later **kings of Judah**, namely, Manasseh and Amon, kept altars there. **Altars which Manasseh had made**—See chap. xxi, 5.

**13. Mount of corruption**—The southern part of the Mount of Olives, now known as the *Mount of Offence*. Solomon probably erected idolatrous altars on various peaks of Olivet, (see note on 1 Kings xi, 7,) but they seem gradually to have been removed towards the southern slopes, or **right hand** of the mountain, to one looking eastward from Jerusalem. **Which Solomon . . . builded**—See on 1 Kings xi, 1–8. It appears, then, that at least some of the high places erected by Solomon had remained until the time of Josiah.

**14. Filled their places with the**

defile. **14** And he <sup>a</sup>brake in pieces the <sup>b</sup>images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men. **15** Moreover the altar that *was* at Beth-el, *and* the high place <sup>c</sup>which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, *and* stamped it small to powder, and burned the grove. **16** And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the <sup>d</sup>word of the Lord which the

<sup>a</sup> 1 Kings 11, 7. — <sup>b</sup> Exod. 23, 24; Deut. 7, 5, 25. — <sup>c</sup> Heb. *statues*. — <sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 12, 28, 33. — <sup>e</sup> 1 Kings 13, 2.

**bones of men**—Turned them into burial grounds, so as utterly to defile them, and prevent their ever being used again for idolatrous purposes.

**15. The altar . . . at Beth-el**—See 1 Kings xiii, 1, 2. Having destroyed idolatry in Judah, the king proceeded northward to the chief seat of the calf-worship, where **Jeroboam . . . made Israel to sin**. Josiah seems to have assumed that after the kingdom of Samaria ceased he was the rightful ruler of the whole land of Israel. **Burned the high place**—Every thing that pertained to the false worship there—buildings, altars, images. The calf which had been set up at Beth-el had been carried into Assyria, (Hosea x, 6,) and the remaining inhabitants seem to have devoted the house and altars to the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. Hence **the grove**, or Asherah image (1 Kings xiv, 15, note) mentioned here.

**16. The sepulchres . . . in the mount**—Apparently in the same *mount* on which Beth-el was situated. During an evening which J. L. Porter spent at this place, he says, "I explored the rock sepulchres, too, which dot the sides of the mount, thinking that one or other of them might be that of the man of God from Judah, whose bones Josiah respected." **Polluted it**—The burning of human bones on an altar was regarded as utterly defiling the sacred place, and rendering it unfit for holy uses. **According to the word**—See 1 Kings xiii, 2.

man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. **17** Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* <sup>the</sup> the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el. **18** And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones <sup>alone</sup> alone, with the bones of <sup>the</sup> the prophet that came out of Samaria. **19** And all the houses also of the high places that *were* <sup>in</sup> in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el. **20** And <sup>he</sup> he <sup>slew</sup> slew all the priests of the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and <sup>burned</sup> burned men's bones upon them, and

returned to Jerusalem. **21** And the king commanded all the people, saying, 'Keep the passover unto the LORD your God,' as *it is* written in the book of this covenant. **22** Surely <sup>there</sup> there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah; **23** But in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem. **24** Moreover <sup>the</sup> the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the <sup>images</sup> images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of <sup>the</sup> the law, which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. **25** <sup>And</sup> And like unto him was there no

<sup>20</sup> 1 Kings 13. 1, 30.—<sup>10</sup> Hebrew, *to escape*.  
—<sup>21</sup> 1 Kings 13. 31.—<sup>11</sup> See 2 Chron. 34. 6, 7.  
—<sup>22</sup> 1 Kings 13. 2.—<sup>11</sup> Or, *sacrificed*.  
—<sup>23</sup> Exod. 22. 20; 1 Kings 18. 40; chap. 11. 18.—  
<sup>6</sup> 2 Chron. 34. 5.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. 35. 1.—<sup>2</sup> Exod. 12. 3; Lev. 23. 5; Num. 9. 2; Deut. 16. 2.—<sup>2</sup> 2 Chron. 35. 18, 19.  
—<sup>2</sup> Chap. 21. 6.—<sup>12</sup> Or, *teraphim*. Gen. 31. 19.—<sup>2</sup> Lev. 19. 31; 20. 27; Deut. 18. 11.—  
<sup>2</sup> Chap. 18. 5.

**17. Men of the city**—Inhabitants of Beth-el, among whom the tradition of the man of God...from Judah lingered with all the impressiveness of a most thrilling tale. Perhaps among these men were a few faithful Israelites, true spiritual children of the seven thousand who, in Elijah's time, had not bowed to Baal, (1 Kings xix, 18,) and who now greatly rejoiced in this signal fulfilment of prophecy.

**18. They let his bones alone**—Literally, let them *escape*; that is, from the desecration which the bones of others in the neighbouring sepulchres suffered. **Out of Samaria**—Out of the country of Samaria, in contrast with the phrase *from Judah*, in the previous verse.

**19. Houses also of the high places**—Temples erected on heights, and devoted to idolatrous purposes.

**20. Slew all the priests**—Literally, sacrificed them; and he did it upon the altars which these very priests had used for idolatrous purposes. **High places that were there**—High places that were in the several cities of Samaria.

**21. Keep the passover**—It seemed to the king appropriate to conclude his great work of reform by a proper observance of this most important relig-

ious festival. **As it is written in the book of this covenant**—Rather, *in this book of the covenant*. It seems this feast had not been held according to the letter of the law, and Josiah's wish was, that this one should be observed *as it was written*.

**22. There was not holden such a passover**—Not that Israel had utterly failed to observe any passover from the days of the Judges to this time, for we are expressly told in 2 Chron. xxx that Hezekiah held a passover, though it was not strictly according to the direction of the law, and it is not supposable that a festival so prominent in the Israelitish *cultus* as this had been neglected under David, and Solomon, and other pious kings. But no such a passover had been held, none so strictly conformed in all things to the very letter of the law of Moses.

**24. Workers with familiar spirits**...wizards—Who seem especially to have multiplied under the reign of Manasseh. Chap. xxi, 6. **Images—Teraphim**. See notes on Joshua xxiv, 14, and 1 Sam. xix, 13.

**25. Like unto him was there no king before him**—It is commonly held that Hezekiah equalled or surpassed him in *trusting* Jehovah, (xviii, 5.)

king before him, that turned to the LORD with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose there *any* like him.

**26** Notwithstanding, the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah, <sup>1</sup> because of all the <sup>13</sup> provocations that Manasseh had provoked him

† Chapter 21. 11, 12; 24. 3, 4; Jeremiah 15. 4.  
13 Hebrew, *angers*.

but that he excelled Hezekiah in his scrupulous adherence **to all the law of Moses**. But see note on chapter xviii, 5.

Josiah was the last true theocratic king of Judah, and, from the great events belonging to his reign, as well as his profoundly earnest effort to extirpate idolatry from all Israel, his name and memory are highly panegyricized in the annals of his people. "The remembrance of Josiah," says the son of Sirach, "is like the composition of the perfume that is made by the art of the apothecary; it is sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine. He behaved himself uprightly in the conversation of the people, and took away the abominations of iniquity. He directed his heart unto the Lord, and in the time of the ungodly he established the worship of God. Except David, Hezekiah, and Josiah, all were defective." Eccles. xlix, 1-4.

Josiah's reformation is open to criticism, for its methods of violence were such as have ever characterized religious persecutions, and it failed, as the subsequent history shows, to effect any permanent change in the nation for the better. "Large as is the space occupied by it in the historical books," says Stanley, "by the contemporary prophets it is never mentioned at all." It may therefore be held up as signal evidence and admonition that violent measures are useless to effect a genuine or permanent reformation. But we must not judge Josiah's work by the standards of our Christian age. What other or milder measures could we rationally expect a Jewish king of that age to have thought of? "Judaism," says Sumner, (in *Schaff's Lange*), "had in-

withal. **27** And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as <sup>1</sup> I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, <sup>1</sup> My name shall be there. **28** Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? **29** <sup>m</sup> In his days Pharaoh-necho king

† Chap. 17. 48, 20; 18. 11; 21. 13.—*l* 1 Kings 3. 29; 9. 3; chap. 21. 4, 7.—*m* 2 Chron. 35. 20.

tolerance as one of its fundamental principles. Violence in support of Jehovah's religion was a duty of a Jewish king. In attempting to account for and understand the conduct of Josiah, it would be as senseless to expect him to see and practice toleration as to expect him to use firearms against Necho. We can never carry back modern principles into ancient times and judge men by the standards of to-day."

#### CONCLUSION OF JOSIAH'S HISTORY, 26-30.

**26. The Lord turned not from . . . his great wrath**—"In spite of all this effort, the kingdom of Judah was doomed. Even the traditions which invested Josiah with a blaze of preternatural glory, maintained that in his day the sacred oil was forever lost. *Too late* is written on the pages even which describe this momentary revival. It did not reach the deeply-seated, widespread corruption which tainted rich and poor alike."—*Stanley*.

**27. The Lord said**—By the prophets. **Out of my sight**—Not out of his knowledge and remembrance. But hitherto Judah had stood as the specially favoured of Jehovah—as in the Divine presence—and the light and smile of his countenance had shone upon them; but now this nearness must end.

**29. Pharaoh-necho**—According to Manetho, he was the sixth king of the twenty-sixth dynasty, and the enterprising monarch who, according to Herodotus, (iv, 42,) fitted out an expedition under charge of the Phœnician sailors, which accomplished the circumnavigation of Africa twenty-one centuries before Vasco de Gama doubled the Cape of Good Hope. He appears

of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew him at <sup>a</sup>Megiddo, when he <sup>o</sup>had

*n* Zech. 12. 11.—*o* Chap. 14. 8.

to have been a most active and energetic king. **Went up against the king of Assyria**—According to Josephus, this expedition of Necho was “to fight with the Medes and Babylonians, who had overthrown the dominions of the Assyrians.” In that case *the king of Assyria* here would mean the Babylonian conqueror, Nabopolassar, who had so recently become ruler of Assyria, and stood in the same relation to Judah, so that the Hebrew historian considered it unnecessary to be more particular. Some think that as the exact date of the fall of Nineveh is not yet settled, it may be that the Assyrian empire was just now in its last stage of weakness, and this weakness tempted Necho to improve the opportunity to conquer Carchemish, (2 Chronicles xxxv, 20,) and attach to his own dominion the Asiatic country west of **the river Euphrates**. But it is fatal to this supposition, that Necho held Carchemish only three years, when it was wrested from him by Nebuchadnezzar, who had then just attained the royal power. Jer. xxv, 1; compare with xli, 2. But Nebuchadnezzar’s father reigned twenty years, and his reign could not have commenced long before the fall of Nineveh. Hence Necho’s conquests on the Euphrates must have occurred after the fall of Assyria. **Josiah went against him**—He probably supposed that if this Egyptian expedition against the king of Assyria was successful, Necho would not spare Judea on his return. Although the king of Egypt pretended to assure him that he had no hostile intentions against Judea, Josiah was too far-sighted a ruler to fail to see that if Egypt extended her dominions beyond him on the east, and so surrounded him, he would soon be required to surrender his independency, and become a mere vassal of Pharaoh. **Slew him at Megiddo**—In the great plain of Esdraelon at the northern base of the Carmel

seen him. **30** <sup>a</sup>And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And

*p* 2 Chronicles 35. 24.

range of mountains, at the site of the modern village el-Lejjun. See at Josh. xii, 21. It appears from the parallel passage in Chronicles that the surrounding plain was sometimes called “the valley of Megiddo.” Near by was Hadadrimmon, and the excessive lamentation of the Jews over the fall of the beloved Josiah became proverbial, and is spoken of by Zechariah (xii, 11) as “the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.” Herodotus seems to refer to this battle between Necho and Josiah when he says (ii, 159) that this king of Egypt “made war by land upon the Syrians and defeated them in a pitched battle at Magdolus,” the latter name being probably a confused form of Megiddo. **When he had seen him**—When the two armies came in conflict on the field of battle, and *looked each other in the face*. See at chap. xiv, 8. It does not appear that Necho slew Josiah with his own hand, but, according to Chronicles, he was shot at and wounded by the archers, and was carried in a chariot to Jerusalem; but where he died is not exactly stated. See on next verse.

**30. Dead from Megiddo**—So he did not die at Jerusalem, as the form of statement in Chronicles would lead one to suppose. He probably gave orders, as soon as wounded, for his whole army to retreat, and he had perhaps been carried as far as Hadadrimmon, some five miles south of Megiddo, before he expired. Hence the origin of the expression, “the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.” Zech. xii, 11. **Buried him in his own sepulchre**—Which was probably “in the garden of Uzza,” where his father (xxi, 26) and grandfather (xxi, 18) had been buried. 2 Chronicles adds, that “all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. And Jeremiah lamented,” together with “all the singing men and the singing women,” so that their lamentations became “an ordinance in Is-

\*the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

**31** <sup>14</sup> Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was <sup>r</sup> Haimutal,

<sup>g</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 1. — <sup>14</sup> *Shallum*, 1 Chron. 3. 15; Jer. 22. 11. — <sup>r</sup> Chap. 24. 18. — <sup>s</sup> Chap. 25. 6;

rael." **People of the land** — The great body of the nation by their representatives, the elders. Compare chap. xi, 24.

#### REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ, 31–35.

**31. Twenty and three years old** — So he was not the real heir to the throne, for Eliakim, (ver. 34.) who was placed on the throne a few months later, was nearly two years older. But "the people of the land," who elected him in place of his elder brother, seem to have discerned in him certain energetic and enterprising or heroic qualities, which were, perhaps, wanting in Eliakim, who was disposed to idleness and luxury. Compare Jeremiah xxii, 10–19, where Jehoahaz is called *Shallum*. **Three months** — Merely the time that Pharaoh-necho was engaged in the conquest of Carchemish.

**32. He did that which was evil** — His short rule evinced his character for evil. It was during that short period that the high places and images were restored in many parts of the land. This shows that Josiah's reformation had not changed the nation's heart.

**33. Put him in bands at Riblah** — Some render, *made him*, or *took him*, *captive at Riblah*. But how came Jehoahaz at Riblah? Some think he marched thither at the head of his army to fight with the Egyptian king, and to avenge the death of his father. More probable, however, is the statement of Josephus, that when Necho returned from his eastern campaign, and arrived at the land of Hamath, "he sent for Jehoahaz to come to him, and when he was come, he put him in bands." Perhaps Necho induced him by some false pretext to come to his camp. *Riblah* is mentioned at Num-

the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. **32** And he did *that which was evil* in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. **33** And Pharaoh-necho put him in bands <sup>a</sup> at Riblah in the land of Hamath, <sup>15</sup> that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and <sup>16</sup> put the land to a tribute of a hundred talents

Jer. 52. 27. — <sup>15</sup> Or, *because he reigned*. — <sup>16</sup> Heb. *set a mulct upon the land*, 2 Chron. 36. 3.

bers xxxiv, 11, as a border city of Israel. Some, however, doubt its identity with this *Riblah in the land of Hamath*. The site of this latter is beyond all question identical with the modern village of the same name, situated on the east bank of the Orontes, about thirty-five miles northeast of Baalbek. It lies in the midst of a vast plain of great beauty and fertility. Here Nebuchadnezzar was encamped when Zedekiah and his sons were brought captives into his presence; and here the sons were slain and the father's eyes put out. Chap. xxv, 6, 7. Here, too, Zedekiah's principal officers were put to death. Chap. xxv, 21. Dr. Robinson, who visited this spot in 1852, remarks: "A more advantageous place of encampment for the hosts of Egypt and Babylon can hardly be imagined. On the banks of a mountain stream, in the midst of this vast and fertile plain, the most abundant supplies of provisions and forage were at hand. From this point the roads were open to the Egyptian monarch across the desert, either by Aleppo and the Euphrates to Nineveh, or by Palmyra to Babylon. From Riblah, too, the host of the Babylonian conqueror could sweep around the end of Lebanon and along the coast to Palestine and Egypt; or, passing on southwards through the Buka'a, could spread themselves out over the land either eastwards or westwards from the valley of the Jordan."

**The land of Hamath** was the territory belonging to the kingdom of this name, and seems to have included the whole valley of the Orontes. **That he might not reign in Jerusalem** — This is the reading of the *Keri*, (*ממלך*) which is sustained by the Septuagint, Chaldee, and Vulgate, and makes better sense than the *Kethib*,

of silver, and a talent of gold. **34** And Pharaoh-necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and "turned his name to Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz away: "and he came to Egypt, and died there. **35** And Jehoiakim gave \*the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the

people of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh-necho.

**36** \*Jehoiakim was twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiiah of Rumah. **37** And he did that *which was evil* in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.

‡ 2 Chron. 36. 4.—u See chap. 24. 17; Dan. 1. 7.  
v Matt. 1. 11, *Jakim*.

w Jer. 22. 11, 12; Ezek. 19. 3, 4.—x Verse 33.  
y 2 Chron. 36. 5.

(במלך) whilst he reigned in Jerusalem. Why Necho refused to ratify the election of Jehoahaz, and made his elder brother king in his place, does not appear, unless it be that Eliakim was the rightful heir to the throne. See on verse 31. It may be that Jehoahaz was a more bold and energetic prince than his elder brother, and the Egyptian king feared that he would soon lead the nation into rebellion against him. Ezekiel (xix, 2, 3) represents him as a young lion which devoured men, of whom, when the nations heard, "he was taken in their pit, and they brought him with chains unto the land of Egypt."

**A hundred talents of silver**—About one hundred and sixty-six thousand dollars. **A talent of gold**—About fifty-six thousand nine hundred dollars. "The relative amount of the silver and the gold is remarkable; but as the same figures are given in 2 Chron. xxxvi, 3, and in 3 Esra (1 Esdras) i, 36, we are not justified in changing them. It may be that Necho wanted silver, which was rarer in the Orient, or that he did not wish to alienate the country too much from himself by pitiless severity."—*Bähr*.

**34. Made Eliakim . . . king**—Some suppose that Eliakim had appealed to Necho to interfere, and had urged that he himself, being the elder son of the deceased Josiah, was the only proper heir to the kingdom. It is possible, also, that Necho took offence at the popular election of Jehoahaz immediately after his father's fall, and without consulting him as his sovereign. **Turned his name to Jehoiakim**—This changing the name of a captive or vassal king was to show the conquer-

or's absolute authority over him. "The alteration of the name was a sign of dependence. In ancient times princes were accustomed to give new names to the persons whom they took into their service, and masters to give new names to their slaves. Gen. xli, 45; Ezra v, 14; Dan. i, 7. But while these names were generally borrowed from heathen deities, Eliakim, and at a later period Mattaniah, (chapter xxiv, 17,) received genuine Israelitish names, *Jehoiakim*, 'Jehovah will set up,' and *Zedekiah*, 'Righteousness of Jehovah;'—from which we may infer that Necho and Nebuchadnezzar did not treat their vassal kings, installed by them, exactly as their slaves, but allowed them to choose the new names for themselves, and simply confirmed them as a sign of their supremacy."—*Keil*.

**35. Jehoiakim gave the silver**—The payment of this tribute is mentioned before the writer takes up directly the history of Jehoiakim's reign; probably because **the commandment of Pharaoh** required him to pay the tribute as the condition of his being elevated to the throne.

REIGN OF JEHOIAKIM, 36–xxiv, 7.

**36. Twenty and five years old**—About two years older than Jehoahaz. Compare verse 31. All accounts of the reign of this prince agree in representing him as excessively given over to wickedness and cruelty. Especially do the prophecies of Jeremiah (compare Jer. xxii–xxvi) depict the fearful corruptions of his times. **His mother's name was Zebudah**—So he was a half brother to Jehoahaz. The locality of **Rumah** is unknown.

## CHAPTER XXIV. IN his days Nebuchadnezzar king

a 2 Chron. 36, 6; Jer.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

**1. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon**—For more than half a century after Merodach-baladan, who was contemporary with Hezekiah, and whom Sennacherib defeated and deposed, (see note on chap. xx, 12,) Babylonia continued to be an Assyrian fief. But some time during the reign of Josiah, Nabopolassar, the viceroy, revolted from Assyria, and formed an alliance with Cyaxares, the great Median monarch, whom he also assisted in the capture and destruction of Nineveh. By mutual agreement between the two confederates the whole valley of the Euphrates, together with Syria and Palestine, fell to Nabopolassar. He was succeeded by his son Nebuchadnezzar, (written also *Nebuchadrezzar*,) whom Rawlinson represents as "the great monarch of the Babylonian empire, which, lasting only eighty-eight years, was for nearly half that time under his sway. Its military glory is due chiefly to him; while the constructive energy, which constitutes its especial characteristic, belongs to it still more markedly through his character and genius. It is scarcely too much to say that, but for *Nebuchadnezzar*, the Babylonians would have had no place in history. At any rate, their actual place is owing almost entirely to this prince, who to the military talents of an able general added a grandeur of artistic conception, and a skill in construction, which place him on a par with the greatest builders of antiquity."

There is a difficulty in the date of Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion of Palestine. According to Dan. i, 1, it occurred in the *third* year of Jehoiakim; but, according to Jer. xxv, 1, the first year of Nebuchadnezzar synchronized with the *fourth* of Jehoiakim, and according to Jer. xlvi, 2, the defeat of Pharaoh-necho at Carchemish occurred in the same year. We learn, also, from a fragment of Berossus, (in *Josephus* x, 11, 1,) that Nabopolassar, being himself too infirm to go to war, put his son

of Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then

25. 1, 9; Dan. 1. 1.

Nebuchadnezzar in command of his army, and that the latter reduced the western provinces, which had been for some years subject to Egypt, and made them subject to Babylon before the death of his father. All this is, perhaps, best explained as follows: The Jewish writers, who knew nothing personally of Nabopolassar, would naturally consider and call Nebuchadnezzar *king of Babylon*, and date his reign from the time he took command of the Babylonian army. Nebuchadnezzar probably started on his western campaign in the latter part of the third year of Jehoiakim, (Dan. i, 1,) and so his first year would synchronize with the greater part of the fourth of Jehoiakim. Jer. xxv, 1. It is possible, as some suppose, that he besieged Jerusalem, and received Jehoiakim's submission, before the battle of Carchemish, (Jer. xlvi, 2;) but this is hardly probable, since the Egyptian garrison at Carchemish would naturally have stood in his way, and would have first engaged his attention. Therefore it would seem that the date mentioned in Dan. i, 1 is either an error, or else to be understood as the time that Nebuchadnezzar *began* his expedition against Jerusalem. **Jehoiakim became his servant**—According to 2 Chronicles xxxvi, 6, Nebuchadnezzar "bound him in fetters to carry him to Babylon." But it is not said that he carried him to Babylon. Probably that was his intention when he bound him; but upon his submission and pledges of fidelity to his conqueror, the latter contented himself with taking off the vessels of the temple, and a number of captives, among whom were Daniel and his three distinguished companions, (Dan. i, 1-7,) while Jehoiakim was left on the throne at Jerusalem as a vassal king. At the end of **three years** he revolted, but the king of Babylon was at that time too busy in the eastern part of his empire to attend in person to this rebellion, and did not proceed against Jerusalem until after the death of Jehoiakim.

he turned and rebelled against him. **2<sup>b</sup>** And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake <sup>1</sup> by his servants the prophets. **3** Surely at the commandment of the Lord came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, <sup>4</sup> for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that

he did; **4** And also for the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the Lord would not pardon. **5** Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah? **6** So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead. **7** And <sup>e</sup> the king of Egypt came not again any more out of his land: for <sup>h</sup> the king of Babylon

<sup>b</sup> Jer. 25, 9; 32, 23; Ezek. 19, 8. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 20, 17; 21, 12-14; 23, 27. — <sup>1</sup> Heb. *by the hand of*. — <sup>d</sup> Chap. 21, 2, 11; 23, 26.

<sup>e</sup> Chapter 21, 16. — <sup>f</sup> 2 Chronicles 36, 6, 8; Jeremiah 22, 18, 19; 36, 30. — <sup>g</sup> Jeremiah 37, 5, 7. — <sup>h</sup> Jeremiah 46, 2.

**2. The Lord sent**—In this verse and the next, the writer emphasizes the thought that the afflictions of Judah were a direct judgment of Jehovah for the sins of the nation, especially those of Manasseh. **Bands**—Predatory troops; not an organized army. **Chaldees**—Natives of Babylonia, or Chaldea, whom, perhaps, Nebuchadnezzar had left to garrison certain frontier towns. They may have warred against Judah by command of Nebuchadnezzar, who, at the time, was unable to attend to the rebellious nation. **Syrians... Moabites... children of Ammon**—Neighbouring tribes on the north and west of Judah, who were all, doubtless, subject to Nebuchadnezzar, and, as Thenius suggests, were pleased with an opportunity of gratifying their ancient hatred against the Jewish people. **To destroy it**—They aimed to ruin Judah, but it seems they were not able to take the city. **By... the prophets**—Chief among whom were Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, Huldah, and Jeremiah. Compare the marginal references.

**3. For the sins of Manasseh**—The judgment came not merely for the actual sins of that one idolatrous king, but, as the whole course of the history shows, because the nation persisted in a class of sins of which those of *Manasseh* were most conspicuous representatives.

**6. Jehoiakim slept with his fathers**—This expression does not necessarily imply that he had a peaceful death; and there is here no mention of his burial, as of other kings. Compare chap. xxiii, 30; xxii, 18, 26; 2 Chron.

xxxii, 33. Jeremiah prophesied of this king, "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." And again: "He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David, and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost." Jer. xxii, 19; xxxvi, 30. The historian does not record the literal fulfilment of these prophecies, but he says nothing inconsistent with such a fulfilment. As the statement that Judas "went and hanged himself" (Matt. xxvii, 5) is consistent also with the fact that "falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out," (Acts i, 18, note,) so also is Jehoiakim's sleeping with his fathers consistent with the dishonouring of his body after death. Some think he was first buried, but that after the capture of Jerusalem his bones were disinterred and exposed to insult before the gate of the city; others, that he was slain in battle with the marauding bands mentioned in verse 2, or was seduced beyond the walls of the city, and there treacherously slain and denied the rites of burial. These are all conjectures, but either of them serves to show that there is no contradiction between the different passages which refer to Jehoiakim's death.

**7. The king of Egypt came not again**—But a subsequent king named Hophra sent an army to raise the siege of Jerusalem. Jeremiah xxxvii, 5-11. "This remark is here inserted to show under what circumstances Jehoiakim succeeded his father, (verse 6,) and how it came that he reigned for so short a

had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

8 <sup>21</sup> Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did *that which was* evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done. 10 <sup>k</sup> At that time the

2 Called *Jeconiah*. 1 Chron. 3. 16. Jer. 24. 1; and *Coniah*. Jer. 22. 24, 28. — <sup>i</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 9. — <sup>k</sup> Dan. 1. 1. — 3 Heb. *came into siege*.

time. Verse 8. Necho had finally retired from Asia after such losses that he could not venture again to meet his victorious enemy, and, therefore, Judah could expect no more support from him. Much less could it attempt alone to resist the conqueror from whom it had revolted."—*Bähr*. **King of Babylon had taken**—Compare Jer. xvi, 2. **River of Egypt**—The Wady el-Arish which formed the south-western boundary of the land of Promise. See on 1 Kings viii, 65, and Josh. xiii, 3.

**JEHOIACHIN'S REIGN, AND THE FIRST GREAT DEPORTATION OF EXILES TO BABYLON, 8–17.**

8. **Three months**—The same length of time that his uncle Jehoahaz had reigned. Chap. xxiii, 21. Such an insignificant rule, and so associated as it was with Judah's direst woe, made the prophet Jeremiah ignore it as any thing worthy to be called a sitting on the throne of David. Jer. xxxvi, 30. Jehoiachin was noted more for his being thirty-seven years in a Babylonian prison. Chap. xxv, 27. But though his reign at Jerusalem was so short and unfortunate, he was looked upon by the exiles as the last lawful successor to the throne of David; and notwithstanding the appointment of Zedekiah, Jehoiachin remained the representative king of Judah, and in the preservation of his life through thirty-seven years of imprisonment, and his elevation to kingly honours in the court of Babylon, (chap. xxv, 27,) the theocratic historian discerned the purpose of Jehovah to perpetuate the throne of David.

10. **Servants of Nebuchadnezzar**

servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city <sup>3</sup> was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. 12 <sup>1</sup> And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his <sup>4</sup> officers: <sup>m</sup> and the king of Babylon <sup>n</sup> took him <sup>o</sup> in the eighth year of his reign.

<sup>l</sup> Jer. 24. 1; 29. 1, 2; Ezek. 17. 12. — 4 Or, *eunuchs*. <sup>m</sup> Jer. 52. 28. — <sup>n</sup> See chap. 25. 27; Jer. 52. 31. — <sup>o</sup> See Jer. 52. 28.

—His generals, with forces sufficient to besiege the city. As the bands mentioned in verse 2 had failed to take Jerusalem, he now sends more imposing forces.

11. **Nebuchadnezzar . . came**—After his generals had laid siege to the city, the king himself came to superintend the war in person.

12. **Jehoiachin . . . went out**—To make a voluntary and complete surrender, probably hoping that such ready submission would secure for himself the favour of the Babylonian monarch, and the privilege granted by the same monarch to his father seven years before, (verse 1,) of continuing at Jerusalem as a vassal king. **His mother . . . servants . . . princes . . . officers**—It was a complete and unconditional surrender, involving all the chief persons of the kingdom of Judah in the fate of the king. The word rendered *officers*

is סְרִיטִי, *eunuchs*, showing that the kings of Jerusalem had at this time introduced this class of servants and officials into the Jewish court. They doubtless borrowed the custom from the eastern monarchs. **Took him**—As a captive. **Eighth year of his reign**—That is, of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. The first year of Nebuchadnezzar was the fourth of Jehoiakim, (Jer. xxv, 1,) and in that year he smote Carchemish (Jer. xli, 2) and received Jehoiakim's submission. Verse 1, note. Jehoiakim reigned seven years after that event, (chap. xxiii, 36,) so that the surrender of Jehoiachin, who had ruled three months, must have fallen in the **eighth year** of Nebuchadnezzar.

**13** And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and <sup>1</sup>cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, <sup>2</sup>as the Lord had said. **14** And <sup>3</sup>he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, <sup>4</sup>even ten thousand captives, and <sup>5</sup>all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save <sup>6</sup>the poorest sort of the people of the land. **15** And <sup>7</sup>he carried away Je-

hoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his <sup>8</sup>officers, and the mighty of the land, <sup>9</sup>those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. **16** And <sup>10</sup>the men of might, *even* seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths a thousand, all <sup>11</sup>that were strong and apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. **17** And <sup>12</sup>the king of Babylon made Mattaniah <sup>13</sup>his father's brother king in his stead, and <sup>14</sup>changed his name to Zedekiah.

<sup>p</sup> Chap. 20. 17; Isa. 39. 6.—<sup>q</sup> See Dan. 5. 2, 3.—<sup>r</sup> Jer. 20. 5.—<sup>s</sup> Jer. 24. 1.—<sup>t</sup> See Jer. 52. 23.—<sup>u</sup> So 1 Sam. 13. 19, 22.—<sup>v</sup> Chap. 25. 12; Jer. 40. 7.

<sup>w</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 10; Esth. 2. 6; Jer. 22. 24, &c.—<sup>x</sup> Or, *eunuchs*.—<sup>y</sup> See Jer. 52. 23.—<sup>z</sup> Jer. 37. 1.—<sup>a</sup> 1 Chron. 3. 15; 2 Chron. 36. 10.—<sup>b</sup> So chap. 23. 34; 2 Chron. 36. 4.

**13. Carried out thence**—From Jerusalem, which he had triumphantly entered after Jehoiachin's surrender.

**Cut in pieces**—כָּרַץ, *he cut off*, or *cut*

*loose*. The same word is used of Ahaz's removal of the borders of the bases, (chap. xvi, 17,) and Hezekiah's taking off the plating of the temple doors. Chap. xviii, 16. **Vessels of gold**—All that remained after the previous deportation, for in the time of Jehoiakim Nebuchadnezzar had taken a portion of the sacred vessels and deposited them in his temple at Babylon. 2 Chron. xxxvi, 7; Dan. i, 2. These were probably the smaller vessels, such as bowls and basins, and were used by Belshazzar in his impious feast, (Dan. v, 3,) and restored by Cyrus when the Jews returned from exile; (Ezra i, 7–11;) but the vessels taken on this occasion seem to have been the heavier and more costly ones, since the word rendered *cut in pieces* implies that they were violently removed. The less costly and valuable vessels, together with the brazen ornaments of the temple, were not at this time disturbed, (Jer. xxvii, 19,) but were seized and carried off eleven years afterwards, when the temple was destroyed. Chap. xxv, 13–17. **As the Lord had said**—By Jeremiah. Jer. xx, 5.

**14. Ten thousand captives**—According to Jer. lii, 28, they numbered three thousand and twenty-three. See note on chap. xxv, 21. Numerically this must have been only a small part of the entire Jewish population, which

in David's time numbered five hundred thousand warriors, so that **the poorest sort of the people**, from whom rebellion and trouble were not expected, were more than the captives; but these latter were the might and flower of the nation, and might, therefore, well be called **all Jerusalem**. The mass of those left were **people of the land**, country people, dwelling outside of Jerusalem; and no doubt by reason of the numerous wars this part of the population had become greatly diminished since the time of David. **The craftsmen and smiths** would be especially serviceable to Nebuchadnezzar on the great works which he contemplated at his capital.

**15. Carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon**—Where he remained in prison for thirty-seven years, and then was liberated and honoured by Evil-merodach. Chap. xxv, 27–30.

**17. His father's brother**—He was half-brother to Jehoiakim, but own brother to Jehoahaz. Compare ver. 18 with chap. xxiii, 31, 36. **Changed his name**—See note on chap. xxiii, 34.

ZEDEKIAH'S REIGN, 18–xxv, 7.

In the fifty-second chapter of Jeremiah we have a duplicate history so nearly identical with the close of this book of Kings from this verse, as to show that both narratives proceeded from one original source. Compare also Jer. xxxix, 1–10. Of the authorship precisely the same thing is to be said as of the history of Hezekiah which is given in chaps. xviii, 13–xx, 21, and

18 <sup>b</sup> Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* <sup>c</sup> Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19 <sup>d</sup> And he did *that which* *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence, <sup>e</sup> that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

<sup>b</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 11; Jer. 37. 1; 52. 1.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 23. 31.—<sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 12.—<sup>e</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 13;

Isa. xxxvi-xxxix. See note introductory to chap. xviii, 13.

20. **Zedekiah rebelled**—In what year is not said, but probably in the eighth year of his reign. Chronicles says, that the king of Babylon "had made him swear by God"—that is, had bound him by the most solemn oath—(compare Ezek. xvii, 13,) to keep the peace by fidelity to the conqueror who had set him on the throne; and in Jer. xxix, 3, and li, 59, mention is made of two embassies of Zedekiah to Babylon, with one of which Zedekiah went in person. In Jer. xxvii, 3, we find messengers from the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Zidon, consulting with Zedekiah, perhaps concerting a plan to throw off the Babylonian yoke; and in Ezek. xvii, 15, Zedekiah is represented as "sending his ambassadors into Egypt, that they might give him horses and much people." Thus he seems to have laid broad plans for his rebellion, and in all this he was encouraged by the false prophets of his time. Jer. xxviii.

## CHAPTER XXV.

1. **Ninth year...tenth month...tenth day**—Compare also the specification of exact dates in verses 3 and 8. "These dates," says Bähr, "could be given thus accurately to the month and the day, because the Jews were accustomed during the exile to fast on the anniversary of these days of disaster." See Zech. vii, 3, 5; viii, 19. On this same day Ezekiel received and uttered his oracle of woe against Jerusalem. Ezek. xxiv, 1. **He, and all his**

## CHAPTER XXV.

**AND** it came to pass <sup>a</sup> in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. 2 And the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. 3 And on the ninth *day* of the <sup>b</sup> fourth month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the

Ezek. 17. 15.—<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 17; Jer. 34. 2; 39. 1; 52. 4, 5; Ezek. 24. 1.—<sup>b</sup> Jer. 39. 2; 52. 6.

**host**—Nebuchadnezzar was, doubtless, present more or less during the two years of siege at Jerusalem, to counsel and direct the besieging army, but he seems to have had his own headquarters most of the time at Riblah. Verses 6, 20. During this same campaign he also fought "against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish and Azekah; for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah." Jer. xxxiv, 7. **Built forts against it round about**—The word rendered *forts* (רִמּוֹן) Michaelis explains as a *wall* or *line of circumvallation*. This is favoured by the Septuagint and the expression *round about*. But according to Gesenius the word means a *watchtower*, and is here to be taken collectively in the *sense of towers* erected by the besiegers to overlook and harass the city.

2. **Unto the eleventh year**—Strong must that city have been which could, after all its previous misfortunes, endure so long a siege as this. It appears from Jer. xxxvii, 5-11, that during this siege the army of Pharaoh-hophra (Jer. xlv, 30) interfered, and for a time obliged the Babylonian forces to retire from Jerusalem.

3. **The fourth month**—The word *fourth* has here been properly supplied by our translators from the parallel in Jeremiah lii, 6. It must have anciently fallen out of this text by the oversight of a copyist. **Famine prevailed**—And its horrors are evidenced in Ezek. v, 10, and especially Lam. ii, 11, 12, 19; iv, 3-10. Not only in the city was there suffering from hunger, but the people of the land—that is, of

land. **4** And <sup>c</sup>the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden: now the Chaldees *were* against the city round about: and *the king* went the way toward the plain. **5** And the army of the Chaldees pursued after the king,

<sup>c</sup> Jer. 39. 2; 52. 7, &c.—<sup>d</sup> Jer. 39. 4-7; 52. 7; Ezek. 12. 12.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 23. 33; Jer. 52. 9.

the surrounding country, which was overrun by the Chaldean army—were destitute of bread.

**4. The city was broken up**—Or, *broken in*. The breach was probably made in the northern wall, for, according to Jer. xxxix, 3, "all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the middle gate"—that is, the gate which led from the upper to the lower city. The sight of them in that position took from the king and his chief men all hope of defending the city, and they hastened to effect their escape, having no reason to expect mercy at the hands of their conquerors. **Fled by night**—Hoping to escape unseen; but too many Chaldean eyes were watching. **The gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden**—According to Neh. iii, 15, *the king's garden* was by the pool of Siloam, that is, at the mouth of the Tyropean valley, and *the gate between two walls* is without doubt the same as "the gate of the fountain." The *two walls* are perhaps the same as those mentioned in Isa. xxii, 11, and were probably extensions of the city walls in this vicinity to guard the pools or cisterns in a time of danger. As the breach was made in the northern wall of the city, the fugitives would naturally make their escape from the southern or south-eastern gate. **The Chaldees . . . round about**—This parenthetical remark is thrown in to show how impossible it was for the fugitives to escape unseen. **Toward the plain**—The plain of Jericho.

**5. All his army were scattered**—When they discovered that they were pursued, the servants and followers of Zedekiah probably forsook him, and fled in various directions, leaving him quite alone. Josephus says, the king

and overtook him in the plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him. **6** So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of Babylon <sup>e</sup>to Riblah; and they <sup>1</sup>gave judgment upon him. **7** And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and <sup>2</sup>put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *spake judgment with him*.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *made blind*.—<sup>f</sup> Jer. 39. 7; Ezek. 12. 13.

was accompanied in his flight by his wives and children, and these probably clung to him to the last.

**6. To Riblah**—See note on chap. xxiii, 33. "Nebuchadnezzar had commenced the siege of Jerusalem in person, (verse 1,) but afterwards, (possibly not till after the Egyptians who came to relieve the besieged city had been repulsed,) he transferred the continuance of the siege, which was a prolonged one, to his generals, and retired to Riblah, to conduct the operations of the whole campaign from thence."—*Keil*. **Gave judgment upon him**—Josephus says: "When he was come, Nebuchadnezzar began to call him a wicked wretch, and a covenant breaker, and one that had forgotten his former words, when he promised to keep the country for him. He also reproached him for his ingratitude, that when he had received the kingdom from him, who had taken it from Jehoiachin and given it to him, he had made use of his power against his benefactor." It was surely no difficult matter for all who had a voice in this *judgment* to find the captive king guilty, and worthy of severest punishment.

**7. Slew the sons . . . before his eyes**—This was not only to intensify Zedekiah's woes by making his sons' execution the last sight of his eyes, but also to end his dynasty. **Put out the eyes of Zedekiah**—This barbarous and cruel punishment was practised by various ancient nations. Thus the Philistines punished Samson when he fell into their power, (Judges xvi, 21,) and thus the Persians tortured great offenders. It was done by thrusting hot irons or a sharp lance into the eyes. On the monuments of Nineveh is the picture of a king piercing with

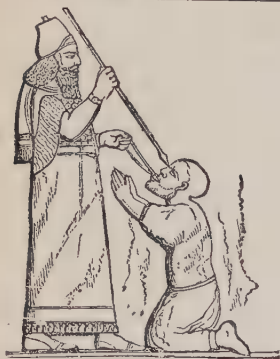
him with fetters of brass, and carried him to Babylon.

8 And in the fifth month, <sup>a</sup>on the seventh day of the month, which <sup>b</sup>is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, <sup>c</sup>came Nebuzar-adan, <sup>d</sup>captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: 9 <sup>e</sup>And he burnt the house of the Lord, <sup>f</sup>and the king's house, and <sup>g</sup>all the houses of Jerusalem, and every

great man's house burnt he with fire. 10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that <sup>h</sup>were with the captain of the guard, <sup>i</sup>brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about. 11 <sup>j</sup>Now the rest of the people that <sup>k</sup>were left in the city, and the <sup>l</sup>fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carry away. 12 But the captain of the guard <sup>m</sup>left of the poor of

<sup>a</sup> See Jer. 52. 12-14.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 24. 12; verse 27.  
<sup>c</sup> Jer. 39. 9.—<sup>d</sup> Or, chief marshal.—  
<sup>e</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 19; Psa. 79. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Jer. 39. 8; Amos 2. 5.—<sup>m</sup> Neh. 1. 3; Jer. 52. 14.—<sup>n</sup> Jer. 39. 9; 52. 15.—<sup>o</sup> Heb. fallen away.—<sup>p</sup> Chap. 24. 14; Jer. 39. 10; 40. 7; 52. 16.



a lance the eyes of some royal captive. **Fetters of brass**—Literally, double brass. See note on Judges xvi, 21. **Carried him to Babylon**—But being sightless, he did not see Babylon and the land of the Chaldeans, so that Ezekiel's prophecy concerning him came literally to pass, (Ezek. xii, 13,) as well as that of Jeremiah, (xxxii, 4,) that he should "surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes should behold his eyes." This latter was fulfilled at Riblah. He died in the land of his captivity, (Ezek. xii, 13,) probably in prison, and not long after his capture and imprisonment. Josephus says he was honoured with a magnificent burial.

#### DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE AND OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH, 8-21.

8. **On the seventh day**—In Jeremiah, (lii, 12,) which seems to be the

preferable text, the reading is, *the tenth day*. Some, however, suppose that he **came** to the city, or commenced the burning of it, *on the seventh day*, and ended it on the *tenth*. Josephus states that the later Herodian temple was destroyed by Titus on the same day of the same month. — *Wars of the Jews*, vi, 4, 8. **Nebuzar-adan**—According to Rawlinson, the name means "Nebo has given offspring." **Captain of the guard**—The word rendered *guard*,

means *slayers* or *executioners*, (טַבָּחִים.)

and the *captain* or *chief* of these is usually understood to be the royal officer who had especially in charge the execution of the death sentence. The margin here reads, *chief marshal*, and in Jer. lii, 12, *chief of the executioners*, or *slaughter men*, who stood before the king of Babylon. He seems to have been the king's principal military officer.

9. **All the houses of Jerusalem**—All the principal houses, or, as the next sentence explains, the houses of all the chief citizens. 2 Chronicles xxxvi, 19 has, *all the palaces*. Thus all the architectural glory of the ancient Jerusalem—temple, palaces, and noble edifices—was reduced to a mass of ruins.

10. **Brake down the walls**—And in that ruined state they remained till the time of Nehemiah. Neh. i, 3; ii, 17.

11. **Rest of the people... in the city**—Such warriors and leading citizens as had not attempted to escape. **Fugitives... to the king of Babylon**—Deserters who had gone over to the Chaldeans. **Remnant of the multitude**—The mass of the less important population in and around Jerusalem.

the land *to be* vinedressers and husbandmen. **13** And <sup>a</sup>the <sup>a</sup>pillars of brass that *were* in the house of the Lord, and <sup>a</sup>the bases, and <sup>a</sup>the brazen sea that *was* in the house of the Lord, did the Chaldees break in pieces, and carried the brass of them to Babylon. **14** And <sup>a</sup>the pots, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass wherewith they ministered, took they away. **15** And the firepans, and the bowls, and such things as *were* of gold, *in* gold, and of silver, *in* silver, the captain of the guard took away. **16** The <sup>a</sup>tw. pillars, <sup>a</sup>one sea, and the bases which Solomon had made for the house of the Lord; <sup>a</sup>the brass of all these vessels was without weight. **17** <sup>a</sup>The height of the one pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the chapter upon it *was* brass: and the height of the chapter three cubits; and the wreathen work, and pomegranates

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 20. 17; Jer. 27. 19, 22; 52. 17, &c.—<sup>g</sup> 1 Kings 7. 15.—<sup>r</sup> 1 Kings 7. 27.—<sup>s</sup> 1 Kings 7. 23.—<sup>t</sup> Exod. 27. 3; 1 Kings 7. 45, 50.—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *the one sea*.—<sup>u</sup> 1 Kings 7. 47.—<sup>v</sup> 1 Kings 7. 15; Jer. 52. 21.—<sup>w</sup> Jer. 52. 24, &c.—<sup>x</sup> 1 Chron.

**12. Vinedressers and husbandmen**—From these poor no trouble was apprehended, and it was deemed wise to leave those who would cultivate the land, in order that the country might not become utterly a desert.

**13. Pillars...bases...sea**—See on 1 Kings vii, 15, 23, 27.

**14, 15. Pots...shovels...snuffers**—On these various vessels see at 1 Kings vii, 40, 45, 50, and Exodus xxvii, 3. Compare Jeremiah, where the list is fuller. All these treasures and ornaments remained after the several previous spoiliations of the temple. See Jer. xxvii, 19.

**16. The brass...was without weight**—That is, there was such a vast amount of brass on the pillars, sea, and bases, that it was impossible to weigh it.

**17. The height of the one pillar**—To justify or explain the last remark, the writer here mentions the size and great ornamentation of the pillars.

**18. Seraiah**—The father of Ezra. Ezra vii, 1. **The second priest**—The most distinguished of the priests of the second or common order. Chap. xxiii, 4. **The three keepers of the door** were "probably the three superintendents of the Levites, whose duty it was to keep

upon the chapter round about, all of brass: and like unto these had the second pillar with wreathen work. **18** <sup>a</sup>And the captain of the guard took <sup>a</sup>Seraiah the chief priest, and <sup>a</sup>Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the <sup>a</sup>door: **19** And out of the city he took an <sup>a</sup>officer that was set over the men of war, and <sup>a</sup>five men of them that <sup>a</sup>were in the king's presence, which were found in the city, and the <sup>a</sup>principal scribe of the host, which mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the people of the land that *were* found in the city: **20** And Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took these, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah: **21** And the king of Babylon smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath. <sup>a</sup>So Judah was carried away out of their land.

6. 14; Ezra 7. 1.—<sup>y</sup> Jer. 21. 1; 29. 25.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *threshold*.—<sup>7</sup> Or, *eunuch*.—<sup>z</sup> See Jer. 52. 25.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *saw the king's face*, Esth. 1. 14.—<sup>9</sup> Or, *scribe of the captain of the host*.—<sup>a</sup> Lev. 26. 33; Deut. 25. 36, 64; chap. 23. 27.

guard over the temple, and who were, therefore, among the principal officers of the sanctuary."—*Keil*. Bähr thinks that "one was stationed at each of the main entrances to the temple;" but the temple had but one main entrance.

**19. An officer**—Hebrew, *a eunuch*, but evidently not one in the strict sense, (see note on chap. xx, 18,) for this officer was a military commander. **Five men**—According to Jeremiah lii, 25, *seven*. Compare note on verse 8. **These were in the king's presence**, that is, were among his most intimate counselors, (comp. Esth. i, 13,) but they had not fled with their royal master, but seem to have concealed themselves **in the city where they were found**. **Principal scribe of the host**—Rather, *scribe of the prince of the host*, that is, his clerk, or aid-de-camp. The *prince* himself, whose office was to muster the army or levy for military service, had probably, as *Thenius* suggests, fled along with the king. **Threescore...of the land**—Probably leading men from the land of Judah, who had distinguished themselves during the siege.

**21. Slew them at Riblah**—See on verse 6. All these officers and principal citizens were regarded as implicated with Zedekiah in his rebellion,

**22** <sup>b</sup> And as for the people that remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, ruler. **23** And when all the <sup>c</sup>captains of the armies, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah to Mizpah, even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of Careah,

<sup>b</sup> Jer. 40. 5.—<sup>c</sup> Jer. 40. 7-9.

and guilty of treason, and were, therefore, punished with death.

According to Jeremiah there were three different deportations of Jewish exiles: in Nebuchadnezzar's seventh year, 3,023; in his eighteenth year, 832; and in his twenty-third year, 745; making in all 4,600. These numbers vary very much from the statements of this book of Kings. According to chap. xxiv, 13, one deportation alone contained 10,000 captives, and occurred in Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year. Verse 12. The difference in the date is but slight, and may be explained by assuming that the different writers began to reckon from different periods of a year; but the numbers in the one or the other passage are undoubtedly corrupt. Most critics incline to think that the numbers in Jeremiah are the more correct. No mention is made in Kings of the third deportation, which occurred, according to Jeremiah, in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, and no mention is made in either book of a small deportation, among whom was Daniel and his three friends, which occurred at the time of Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion of Palestine, and with which the Babylonish captivity of Judah seems really to have begun. But no doubt many that were left in the land proved to be persistently rebellious, and provoked the king of Babylon to order their extirpation.

#### APPOINTMENT AND ASSASSINATION OF GEDALIAH, 22-26.

The events of this section are narrated with ample details in Jer. xl-xliv, and to those chapters the student must go for a fuller history of those who survived the fall of Jerusalem.

and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men.

**24** And Gedaliah <sup>d</sup>swore to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon; and it shall be well with you.

**25** But <sup>e</sup>it came to pass in the seventh month, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the seed

<sup>d</sup> 2 Sam. 14. 11; 19. 23.—<sup>e</sup> Jer. 41. 1, 2

**23. The captains of the armies—**The men of war who fled by night with Zedekiah from Jerusalem, (verse 4,) but soon after deserted him, and had become scattered "in the fields." Jer. xl, 7. **To Mizpah—**In the land of Benjamin. See on Josh. xviii, 25, and 1 Sam. vii, 5. The city had been strongly fortified by Asa, (1 Kings xv, 22,) and Gedaliah occupied it instead of Jerusalem, because the latter city was in too ruinous a condition to be any proper residence for a governor.

**24. Swore to them—**Assured them upon oath that they had no reason to fear further trouble. They seem to have come to him to understand the situation of things, being yet in fear for their own lives. **Fear not to be the servants—**Rather, *be not afraid of the servants of the Chaldees*. Ishmael was of the royal seed, and had reason to fear a fate similar to that of other members of the royal house who had fallen into the hands of the Chaldees. Gedaliah, as governor, assures him and the rest that no harm will befall them if they continue peaceably in the land. These *servants of the Chaldees* are to be understood as Babylonian officials stationed in various parts of the land to co-operate with Gedaliah in preserving order.

**25. In the seventh month—**Only two months after the destruction of Jerusalem. Verse 8. **Ishmael. . . came—**According to Jer. xl, 14, he was instigated to this deed by Baalis, the king of the Ammonites, and Johanan had warned Gedaliah of the plot, but the latter would not credit it. **Of the seed royal—**This explains the deeper cause of his action. He was jealous of Gedaliah, and unwilling, as a mem

<sup>10</sup> royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. **26** And all the people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came to Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

<sup>10</sup> Heb. *of the kingdom*.—*f* Jer. 43. 4, 7.

ber of the royal house, to be subject to him. **And the Jews and the Chaldees. . . at Mizpah**—He aimed to annihilate this new-made government, and according to Jeremiah was proceeding with many captives to the Ammonites when he was overtaken and put to flight by Johanan, who had gathered some forces and pursued him.

**26. Both small and great**—All classes and all ages. **Captains of the armies**—Commanders of the military forces that had been subject to Gedaliah. At the head of them was Johanan, who had just taken command, and had led them successfully against Ishmael. **Came to Egypt**—Against the word of the Lord and the warnings of the prophet Jeremiah. Chap. xlii. They thought it best for them now to seek the protection of that power that had interposed to help them during the late siege of Jerusalem, and had<sup>2</sup> obliged the Chaldees for a time to retire from the city. Jer. xxxvii, 5–11. **They were afraid of the Chaldees**—So fearful an impression had the horrors of the late siege and the Chaldean power made upon them, that they could not feel safe anywhere in the dominions of Nebuchadnezzar. They had been made to feel the tremendous power of that “bitter and hasty nation . . . terrible and dreadful,” of whom Habakkuk had prophesied. Hab. i, 5–11.

#### RELEASE OF JEHOIACHIN FROM PRISON, 27–30.

**27. Seven and thirtieth year**—So identified was the captivity of Jehoiachin with that of the great mass of the Jewish exiles that its beginning formed a chronological epoch in their history. Compare Ezra i, 2. It was in Nebuchadnezzar's eighth year that Jehoiachin was made captive, (chap. xxiv, 12,) and these thirty-seven years

**27** <sup>8</sup> And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evil-merodach king of Babylon in the year that he began<sup>a</sup> to reign<sup>b</sup> did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of pris-

*g* Jer. 52. 31, &c.—*h* See Gen. 40. 13, 20.

added would bring it to his forty-fifth year; but he had recently died, and a new king was on the throne, so that Nebuchadnezzar's reign, according to these Scriptures, must have been forty-four years long. According to Ptolemy's Canon and Josephus, it was forty-three years; but this slight difference is explained by the fact that the Scripture writer reckons his reign from the time he took command of the army of Babylon, a year, or, perhaps, a little more, before his father's death. See note on chap. xxiv, 1. **Seven and twentieth day**—According to Jeremiah, *five and twentieth*. **Evil-merodach** was son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. According to Berosus, “he governed public affairs after an illegal and impure manner, and had a plot laid against him by Neriglissar, his sister's husband, and was slain by him when he had reigned but two years.”—JOSEPHUS, *Cont. Apion*, i, 20. And this is about all that is known of him. The rabbies have a tradition that he contracted a friendship for Jehoiachin in prison, whither he himself had been cast by his father for a public offence. **In the year that he began to reign**—He “seems to have wished to signalize the beginning of his reign by an act of kindness to the Jews.” Rawlinson suggests “that the marvellous events of his father's life, which are recorded in the book of Daniel, had made a deep impression upon him, and that he was thence inclined to favour the persons, and perhaps the religion, of the Jews.” **Lift up the head. . . out of prison**—An expression that evidently originated in the fact that a prisoner would naturally have his head bowed down under the weight of his sorrow and despondency, and liberation would cause him to lift up his head with gladness and comfort.

on; **28** And he spake <sup>u</sup>kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon; **29** And changed his prison garments: and he did <sup>i</sup>eat bread continually

before him all the days of his life. **30** And his allowance *was* a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

11 Heb. *good things with*

him.—i 2 Samuel 9. 7.

**28. Spake kindly to him**—Or, spake with him good things; words of comfort and pledges of honourable treatment. **Set his throne above the throne of the kings**—Assigned him a more honourable seat in his court, and regarded him with higher esteem, than he did other vassal kings and royal captives who added dignity and splendour to his court. Doubtless there were many such captive kings **with him in Babylon**.

**29. Changed his prison garments**—By putting them off, and clothing him with apparel worthy of a captive king. **Eat bread continually before him**—He was treated with all the familiarity and honour of a royal courtier. Compare 2 Sam. xi, 7. **All the days of his life**—How long he lived to en-

joy these honours is **not** said, but he probably died before his benefactor.

**30. A continual allowance**—A daily apportionment for the support of the servants and attendants who ministered to the captive king. All this kind and honourable treatment of the long-imprisoned king of Judah was to the Jewish exiles a consolatory sign that Jehovah would dispose the heart of some king to release them from their exile, and restore them to their fatherland again. And thus this history appropriately closes with a ray of light breaking in upon the future of Judah, and assuring these exiles that Jehovah is "the tower of salvation for his king, and sheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore." 2 Sam. xxii, 51.



Jews' Walling Place.

# INTRODUCTION TO CHRONICLES.

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IN the ancient Hebrew copies the two books of Chronicles, like the books of Samuel and Kings, form one undivided work. The division into two books originated, in this case as in those, with the Septuagint translators; thence it passed over to the Vulgate; and thence to all the later versions, and also to the modern editions of the Hebrew Bible. The division of these books is much more appropriate than that of the books of Kings, for the first book closes with the death of David, and the second opens with the beginning of Solomon's reign.

The Hebrew name for these books is דִּבְרֵי הַיָּמִים, *Dibre hayamim*, *words of the days*; that is, the daily acts or events of the times of individuals, especially of kings. This title seems to have been adopted from the ancient public annals of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, which are so often referred to by the writer of the books of Kings. 1 Kings xiv, 19, 29; xv, 7, 23, 31, etc. The books of Kings and Chronicles gradually displaced or superseded the more ancient annals, and so very naturally took their name. The meaning of the Hebrew title is well expressed by the word *Ephemerides*, a name which some of the later Latin writers have applied to these books.

The Septuagint translators named the work Παραλειπόμενα, *Paraleipomena*, which means *things omitted*. They seem to have thought that these books were supplementary to Samuel and Kings, and so designed to furnish important information which had been omitted in those earlier books. The name *Chronicles* is supposed to have originated in a remark of St. Jerome, that the *Dibre hayamim* might be more significantly called *the Chronicon of the whole Sacred History*, (*Chronicon totius Divinæ Historiæ*.) This name appears in some copies of the Vulgate, and in most of the later versions, and is now the prevailing title.

## Date and Author.

The work evidently belongs to a period subsequent to the Babylonish exile. In 1 Chron. iii, 19–24, the genealogy of David is brought down to Zerubbabel and beyond. A comparison of the list of the  
VOL. IV.—21

first inhabitants" of Jerusalem as given in 1 Chron. ix, 2-17, with Nehemiah xi, 3-19, will show that both lists belong to post-exile times. The close of the work (2 Chron. xxxvi, 22) brings down the narrative to the days of Cyrus and the restoration. These internal evidences of a post-exile date are abundantly confirmed by the language and phraseology. Numerous Aramaisms, and a use of certain foreign words, together with other peculiarities of diction and orthography which characterize the later Hebrew, place the Chronicles in the same class of literature with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. And these, and other minor points of a similar nature, favour and confirm the opinion almost unanimous among the Jews, and undisputed in Christendom till the middle of the seventeenth century, that Chronicles is the work of Ezra.

The only objection to this opinion of any weight is the genealogy of the house of David, which in 1 Chron. iii, 19-24 seems to be carried down five generations beyond Zerubbabel. Upon this point certain rationalistic critics have fastened, and tried to show that the Chronicles must have been written as late as the time of Alexander the Great, or even later. But it has been shown to be not at all impossible that the latest descendant of Zerubbabel mentioned in this passage may have been living in the time of Ezra, (see note on the passage;) but if that explanation be considered unsatisfactory, it is much easier and more natural to regard those few verses as an addition by a later hand than to set aside the other numerous and weighty evidences that assign the work to the times of Ezra.

A number of eminent critics are of opinion that the books of Chronicles and Ezra formed, originally, one undivided work. They argue from the identity of the close of Chronicles with the beginning of Ezra, and the noticeable similarity in spirit, language, and style, and suppose that the separation may have been made in order to place the post-exile narrative of Ezra in chronological sequence after the Book of Daniel, which contained a history of the captivity. Accordingly what was the closing section of Chronicles was detached, and, under the name of Ezra, was inserted between Daniel and Nehemiah, its present position in the Hebrew Canon. Whatever may be thought of this conjecture, the main arguments by which it is supported seem abundantly to show, in the absence of any good reason to the contrary, that the books of Chronicles and Ezra proceeded from the same author.

### Sources.

To authenticate his narrative and refer his reader to sources where he might obtain fuller information, if desired, the writer of Chronicles has explicitly named more ancient works than all the other sacred

writers put together. These works, in the order in which they are mentioned, are the following:—

1. THE CHRONICLES OF KING DAVID..... 1 Chron. xxvii, 24.
2. THE BOOK OF SAMUEL THE SEER..... 1 Chron. xxix, 29.
3. THE BOOK OF NATHAN THE PROPHET..... 1 Chron. xxix, 29; 2 Chron. ix, 29.
4. THE BOOK OF GAD THE SEER..... 1 Chron. xxix, 29.
5. THE PROPHECY OF AHIAH THE SHILONITE..... 2 Chron. ix, 29.
6. THE VISIONS OF IDDO THE SEER AGAINST JEROBOAM THE SON OF NEBAT... 2 Chron. ix, 29.
7. THE BOOK OF SHEMAIAH THE PROPHET..... 2 Chron. xii, 15.
8. IDDO THE SEER CONCERNING GENEALOGIES..... 2 Chron. xii, 15.
9. THE STORY (MIDRASH) OF THE PROPHET IDDO..... 2 Chron. xiii, 22.
10. THE BOOK OF THE KINGS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL..... 2 Chron. xvi, 11; xxv, 26; xxvii, 7; xxviii, 26; xxxv, 27; xxxvi, 8.
11. THE BOOK OF JEHU THE SON OF HANANI..... 2 Chron. xx, 34.
12. THE BOOK OF THE KINGS OF ISRAEL..... 2 Chron. xx, 34; xxxiii, 18.
13. THE STORY (MIDRASH) OF THE BOOK OF THE KINGS..... 2 Chron. xxiv, 27.
14. THE ACTS OF UZZIAH, BY ISAIAH THE PROPHET..... 2 Chron. xxvi, 22.
15. THE VISION OF ISAIAH THE PROPHET..... 2 Chron. xxxii, 32.
16. THE SAYINGS OF CHOZAI..... 2 Chron. xxxiii, 19.
17. THE LAMENTATIONS..... 2 Chron. xxxv, 22.

These works may be divided into three classes, according to the supposed nature of their contents: (1.) *Historical Annals*, Nos. 1, 10, 12 of the above list; (2.) *Commentaries* on the reigns of certain kings, Nos. 9, 13; (3.) *Prophetical Monographs*, Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17. But the exact character and extent of these various writings it is of course impossible to decide. Perhaps some of them may be identical with some of our present canonical books, but most of them, if not all, have long since been lost. Of the *Historical Annals* referred to, "The Chronicles of King David" (No. 1) were public or State documents prepared and kept by the royal scribes. This appears evident from the character of the items it was customary to record in them. 1 Chron. xxvii, 24. "The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel," (No. 10,) or "of Israel and Judah," as it is sometimes called, is more frequently referred to by our author than any other work, and was probably a general history of the two kingdoms compiled from the two great works so often referred to in the books of Kings—"The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel," and "The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah." See Introduction to the books of Kings. It was not identical, as some have thought, with our canonical books of Kings, for it contained, according to 2 Chron. xxvii, 7, matters not to be found in those books. Nor was it identical with those more ancient "Chronicles," from which the author of Kings quotes, for they were two separate books, whereas this was one work. Whether "The Book of the Kings of Israel" (No. 12) was a different work, or the same as No. 10, is difficult to decide. The title would naturally indicate a different book, but many critics regard them as the same work, and take "Israel" in the title of No. 12 in the

wider sense of the whole Israelitish nation, including the two kingdoms. Certain it is that this "Book of the Kings of Israel" contained sundry acts and words of Jewish kings (Jehoshaphat and Manasseh, 2 Chron. xx, 34; xxxiii, 18) not elsewhere preserved.

The *Commentaries*, or *Midrashim*, of Iddo and of the Book of Kings (Nos. 9, 13) seem to have been essays or disquisitions on the acts and sayings of certain kings—Abijah and Joash, 2 Chron. xiii, 22; xxiv, 27. The word מִדְּרָשׁ, strangely rendered *story* in our version, occurs in Scripture only in these passages in Chronicles. In the later Jewish and Rabbinical literature the word is common, and denotes the study and exposition of the sacred books. It evidently comes from the Hebrew root דָּרַשׁ, *to seek; to inquire into*; and as used in Chronicles would naturally denote a treatise or essay devoted to the investigation of particular parts of the Jewish national history, and an exposition of the moral and religious influence and results of the acts of certain kings. Such a work would naturally involve the recital of many historical details which could not elsewhere be found so fully written. Thus the *Midrash* of the prophet Iddo was devoted to the "ways" and "sayings" of Abijah, and contained a fuller account of many of his "acts" than could be found anywhere else. The *Midrash* of the Book of the Kings was probably a more extended treatise, written by some other prophet, and devoted to a like discussion of the ways and words of a number of the kings of Judah. These *Midrashim* thus differed from other prophetic works in being of a more expository, and, perhaps, philosophical character.

The *Prophetical Monographs*, which constitute the other sources referred to by our author, were doubtless of varied character and extent. Iddo, the prophet and seer, was the author of two other works (Nos. 6 and 8) besides his *Midrash* on the ways and words of Abijah. His "Visions against Jeroboam the Son of Nebat" was a work which contained information on the life and acts of Solomon, (2 Chron. ix, 29,) from which fact we infer that it was a treatise that detailed the relations of Solomon and Jeroboam to each other, and gave a prophetic description of the character and evil results of Jeroboam's life and reign. Some have identified this Iddo with the mysterious prophet of Judah who uttered the oracles of judgment against the altar and calf-worship at Beth-el. 1 Kings xiii, 1. Josephus (*Antiq.*, viii, 9, 1) calls him *Iadon*, (Ἰαδών.) His work "concerning genealogies" (2 Chron. xii, 15) contained the acts of Rehoboam. The phrase "concerning genealogies" is ambiguous, and seems to belong as much to the book or words of Shemaiah (No. 7) as to that of Iddo. Several eminent critics render the whole passage thus: "The acts

of Rehoboam, the first and the last, are they not written in the words of Shemaiah the prophet, and of Iddo the seer, after the manner of a family register?" The most that can well be conjectured is, that these books of Iddo and Shemaiah were written in some tabular form, preserving the events of Rehoboam's reign after the manner of a genealogy. "The Vision of Isaiah the Prophet" (No. 15) is usually supposed to have been historical, consisting chiefly of a biography of Hezekiah. It may, however, have been identical with our canonical Book of Isaiah, to which the writer of Chronicles might well have referred for the details of Hezekiah's reign which are furnished in Isa. xxxvi-xxxix; for there is no sufficient reason for supposing that this "Vision of Isaiah" contained a full history of *all* the acts of Hezekiah. The other work of Isaiah which our author names (No. 14) was more historical in its character, since it contained "the acts of Uzziah, first and last," 2 Chron. xxvi, 22. This work was evidently, as its name indicates, an extended account of the reign of King Uzziah. The books of Samuel, (No. 2,) Nathan, (No. 3,) Gad, (No. 4,) Abijah, (No. 5,) and Jehu, (No. 11,) were prophetic-historical documents treating particular periods of the national history with probably greater fulness than any other works. In most cases they were probably written by the persons whose names they bear. It is barely possible that "the Book of Samuel the Seer" (No. 2) may have been the same as our canonical books of Samuel. "The Sayings of Chozai," (No. 16,) or *Hosai*, as the margin of the English version has it, (2 Chron. xxxiii, 19,) was a prophetic monograph on Manasseh's reign, similar in character to some of the works above described. According to the English version, which follows the Septuagint, and renders the word חוּזַי, *Chozai*, "seers," the reference would not be to any one particular work, but, generally, to the books of such seers as were commonly known to have written on the subject. "The Lamentations" (No. 17) was probably a collection of national dirges, in which such songs of sorrow as Jeremiah composed on the death of Josiah naturally found a place. It could hardly have been our canonical Book of Lamentations, since that contains no mention of Josiah.

Besides the above works, which our author has named as his authorities, he doubtless had access to all the older Hebrew literature which is still extant, and drew from it such things as served his purpose. Some critics have affirmed, and others have denied, that our canonical books of Samuel and Kings were among the sources used by the chronicler; but as all admit that he had access to these books, there seems to be no valid reason for denying that he sometimes used them. Numerous verbal parallels between Kings and Chronicles are best explained by supposing that the author of the latter quoted directly

from the former. The number of books above cited which are not now extant, together with others of similar character mentioned in other Old Testament books, indicate what a large amount of ancient Hebrew literature has been lost to the Church and the world.

### Relation to the Books of Samuel and Kings.

The history of Israel from the death of Saul to the Babylonish captivity is gone over by the writer of Chronicles in such a way as to furnish a parallel to a large portion of 2 Samuel and the two books of Kings. In comparing the different books, however, we note in Chronicles numerous omissions and additions, as well as many parallels more or less close. Some passages in Chronicles seem to be almost a verbal transcript from Samuel or Kings, while others substantially parallel are more or less fully detailed. The following tabulated summary of the principal parallels, omissions, and additions, will assist the student in a comparison of the different books:—

#### PARALLEL PASSAGES.

Death of Saul.....	1 Sam. xxxi.....	1 Chron. x, 1-12.
Anointing of David and Capture of Zion.....	2 Sam. v, 1-8; 6-10.....	" xi, 1-9.
David's mighty men.....	" xxiii, 8-39.....	" xi, 10-47.
Removal of the ark.....	" vi.....	" xiii, xv, xvi.
David's negotiations with Hiram and his family; the Philistine war.....	" v, 11-25.....	" xiv.
David's purpose to build the temple.....	" vii.....	" xvii.
David's victories and officers.	" viii.....	" xviii.
The Ammonite war.....	" x, xi, 1; xii, 26-31.....	" xix, xx, 1-8.
Feats of David's heroes.....	" xxi, 18-22.....	" xx, 4-8.
David's sin in numbering the people.....	" xxiv.....	" xxi.
Solomon's sacrifice and choice at Gibeon.....	1 Kings iii, 4-15.....	2 Chron. i, 2-13.
Solomon's riches.....	" x, 26-29.....	" i, 13-17.
Preparations for building the temple.....	" v.....	" ii.
Building and dedication of the temple.....	" vi, vii, 13-51; viii.....	" iii, vii, 1-11.
The Lord's word to Solomon.	" ix, 1-9.....	" vii, 12-22.
Solomon's public works, labourers, and commerce.....	" ix, 10-28.....	" viii.
The queen of Sheba.....	" x, 1-13.....	" ix, 1-12.
Solomon's revenues.....	" x, 14-29.....	" ix, 13-28.
Solomon's death.....	" xi, 41-43.....	" ix, 29-31.
The kingdom divided.....	" xii, 1-24.....	" x, xi, 1-4.
Account of Rehoboam.....	" xiv, 21-31.....	" xii, 2, 3, 9, 16.
of Abijah.....	" xv, 1, 2, 6-8.....	" xiii, 12; xiv, 1.
of Asa.....	" xv, 11-24.....	" xiv, 2-5; xv, 16-19 xvi, 1-6, 11-14.
of Jehoshaphat.....	" xxii, 2-35, 41, 51.....	" xviii, xx, 31; xxi, 1.
of Jehoram.....	2 Kings viii, 16-24.....	" xxi, 5-10, 20.
of Ahaziah.....	" viii, 25-29; ix, 16-28; x, 12-14.	" xxii, 1-9.

Account of Athuliah .....	2 Kings xi .....	2 Chron. xxii, 10; xxvii.
of Joash .....	" xii .....	" xxiv, 1-14, 23-27.
of Amaziah .....	" xiv, 1-14, 17-20 .....	" xxv, 1-4, 11, 17-28.
of Uzziah .....	" xiv, 21, 22, xv, 2-7 .....	" xxvi, 1-4, 21-23.
of Jotham .....	" xv, 38-38 .....	" xxvii, 1-3, 7-9.
of Ahaz .....	" xvi, 2-4, 19, 20 .....	" xxviii, 1-4, 27.
of Hezekiah .....	" xviii, 2, 3, 13-xx, 1, 2, 20, 21.	" xxix, 1, 2; xxxii, 24, 25, 32, 33.
of Manasseh and Amon ..	" xxi, 1-9, 18-24 .....	" xxxiii, 1-10, 20-25.
of Josiah .....	" xxii, xxiii, 1-3, 21-23, 28-30.	" xxxiv, 1, 2, 8, 32; xxv 1, 18-24, 26, 27.
of Jehoahaz .....	" xxiii, 81-84 .....	" xxxvi, 1-4.
of Jehoiakim .....	" xxiii, 36, 37; xxiv, 1, 5, 6.	" xxxvi, 5, 6, 8.
of Jehoiachin .....	" xxiv, 8-15 .....	" xxxvi, 9, 10.
of Zedekiah .....	" xxiv, 17-20 .....	" xxxvi, 11-13.

## OMISSIONS.

David's grief for Saul and Jonathan .....	2 Sam. i, 11-27.
David's reign at Hebron .....	" ii, 1-7.
War between the house of Saul and house of David .....	" ii, 8; iv.
Michal's reproof .....	" vi, 20-23.
David's kindness to Mephibosheth .....	" ix.
David's adultery, and death of Uriah .....	" xi, 2-27.
Nathan's parable .....	" xii, 1-14.
Death of the child of David and Bathsheba .....	" xii, 15-23.
Amnon's incest and Absalom's revenge .....	" xiii.
Absalom's rebellion .....	" xiv-xix.
Sheba's rebellion .....	" xx.
The Gibeonites avenged, and burial of Saul and Jonathan's bones .....	" xxi, 1-14.
A war with the Philistines .....	" xxi, 15-17.
David's Psalm and last words .....	" xxii, xxiii, 1-7.
Adonijah's usurpation .....	1 Kings i.
David's charge to Solomon .....	" ii, 1-9.
Downfall of Solomon's personal foes .....	" ii, 13-46.
Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter .....	" iii, 1.
Solomon's judicial sagacity .....	" iii, 16-28.
Solomon's officers, glory, and wisdom .....	" iv.
Description of the palace .....	" vii, 1-12.
Solomon's sins and adversaries .....	" xi, 1-40.

The history of the northern kingdom of the Ten Tribes, which is narrated in the Kings with greater fulness than the history of the kingdom of Judah, is altogether omitted in Chronicles.

## ADDITIONS.

List of those who came to David at Ziklag and Hebron .....	1 Chron. xii, 1-40.
The Levites who assisted at the removal of the Ark to Zion .....	" xv, 2-24.
David's preparations for building the temple .....	" xxii.
The organizing and classifying of the Levites and priests .....	" xxiii-xxvi.
Arrangement of the military and civil officers .....	" xxvii.
David's last instructions to the assembled princes and to Solomon just before his death .....	" xxviii, xxix.
Supplement to the history of Rehoboam .....	2 Chron. xi, 5-24.
Number and nationality of Shishak's forces .....	" xii, 3.
Shemaiah's prophecies .....	" xi, 3; xii, 5-8.
Ahijah's war with Jeroboam .....	" xiii, 3-20.

Asa's works and victory over Zerah.....	2 Chron. xiv, 3-15.
Azariah's prophecy and Asa's reforms.....	" xiv, 1-15.
Hanani's oracle against Asa.....	" xvi, 7-10.
Jehoshaphat's reforms; his power and riches.....	" xvii, xviii, 1.
Jehu's rebuke, and Jehoshaphat's further reforms.....	" xix.
Jehoshaphat's victory over Moab and Ammon.....	" xx, 1-30.
The sons of Jehoshaphat slain by Jehoram.....	" xxi, 2-4.
Jehoram's idolatry and punishment.....	" xxi, 11-19.
Death of Jehoiada and wickedness of Joash.....	" xxiv, 15-22.
Amaziah's warlike preparations and idolatry.....	" xxv, 5-10, 14-16.
Amaziah's wars and military force.....	" xxvi, 6-15.
Jotham's fortifications and war with Ammon.....	" xxvii, 4-6.
Supplement to Hezekiah's history.....	" xxix, 3; xxxi, xxxii, 27-30.
Manasseh's captivity, repentance, and reforms.....	" xxxiii, 11-17.
The manner of Josiah's passover.....	" xxxv, 2-17.

A careful study and comparison of these parallels, omissions, and additions, together with other minor likenesses and differences too numerous and minute to be specified here, show that Chronicles is an independent work. It has much in common with Samuel and Kings, but while omitting many things therein recorded, it contains much additional matter, of which we have no other record now extant.

The discrepancies and contradictions between Chronicles and other books of Scripture, alleged formerly by De Wette and other rationalistic critics, are sufficiently explained in the notes on the passages where they were supposed to occur; and the attacks upon the credibility of much of the history made by the same critics have been so thoroughly refuted by more recent writers, and are in themselves so singularly wanting in validity and force, as to demand no detailed notice here. Many of the rationalistic attacks upon Chronicles were made with the avowed purpose of putting out of the way a most troublesome witness to the antiquity of the Pentateuch, and clearly showed that their authors were governed by a dogmatic interest and a foregone conclusion.

### Characteristics and Peculiarities of the Chronicles.

A comparison with the other historical books of the Old Testament, and especially with Samuel and Kings, reveals in Chronicles a number of peculiarities which it becomes us here to note. One of the first things to be noticed by even the casual reader is the writer's fondness for putting on record genealogies and lists of distinguished persons. Thus the first nine chapters are devoted to genealogies, and we can hardly read through three consecutive chapters in any part of the work without meeting some tabulated list of names. In this respect the work resembles Ezra and Nehemiah more than the other historical books.

Another noticeable peculiarity is the author's predilection for the

Levitical order. His work has been called "ecclesiastical," rather than "political." He dwells at length on matters pertaining to the temple services. "In the mind of the writer of Chronicles," says Rawlinson, "the religious establishment is of primary, the State of secondary, importance. Of the nine introductory chapters, one is concerned entirely, and another mainly, with the sons of Levi, while six suffice for the whole of the remaining tribes. In the history of David, which occupies twenty chapters, eleven treat of the religious history—the removal of the ark, the preparations for the building of the temple, and the arrangements made for the contemplated religious services, while no more than nine treat of the civil history of the period. In the account of Solomon, extending to nine chapters, six chapters are occupied wholly with religious matters, while two of the remaining three are divided between the religious and the secular history. In the account of the curtailed kingdom of Judah which follows, the only reigns treated at any length are those of the religious reformers, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah. United, these reigns occupy as much space as those of all the other kings put together. The reign of Hezekiah may be taken as a crucial instance of the difference between the modes of treatment pursued by the writers of Chronicles and Kings. The writer of Kings devotes three, the writer of Chronicles four, chapters to the subject. Both represent the reign as remarkable, (1,) for a religious reformation, and (2,) for striking events of secular history, in which Judea was brought into connexion with the great monarchies of the time, Babylonia and Assyria. But while the writer of Kings thinks it enough to relate the religious reformation in three verses, (2 Kings xviii, 4–6,) and devotes to the secular history—treated indeed from a religious point of view—the whole remainder of his three chapters, the writer of Chronicles gives the heads of the secular history in one chapter, while he devotes to the religious reformation the remaining three chapters of his four."

Another characteristic is described by the writer just quoted as "a constant, open, and direct ascription of all the events of the history to the Divine agency, and especially a more plain reference of every great calamity or deliverance to the good or evil deeds of the monarch, or the nation, which Divine Providence so punished or rewarded." This characteristic he calls "the key-note of Chronicles," "struck as soon as any narrative is entered upon, and thenceforth recurs, like the refrain of a song, in connexion with almost every portion of the narrative." 1 Chron. iv, 10; v, 18–20, 25, 26; ix, 1, are instanced as all occurring "in the dry genealogical introduction," and illustrating the spirit and aim of the writer. "When the historical portion of the work commences, the key-note is once more struck with a peculiar

emphasis, that the writer's object may be unmistakable. 'Saul died *for his transgression* which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of it; and inquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David.' 1 Chron. x, 13, 14. Henceforth the entire narrative does but repeat and deepen this one impression."

Some of the omissions which we have previously noticed may be regarded as a peculiarity of the chronicler. Especially, in view of the last mentioned characteristic, may the omission of any mention of David's and Solomon's greatest sins be thought strange. Some have hastily concluded that these omissions sprung from a desire to conceal the flagrant crimes of Israel's greatest monarchs. But this could hardly be, since they were already published to the world; and the writer does not omit to mention other sins of these great kings, (for example, 1 Chron. xxi, 1, 8; 2 Chron. ix, 25,) and the sins of other kings of Judah. We cannot determine in every case why the writer omitted this, or added that, but on this point Wordsworth well observes: "His silence is a testimony to the sufficiency of the previous narratives, and is an evidence that the claims of historical justice were thereby satisfied. And it suggests a salutary lesson of charity, which loves to cover sins, especially of the penitent and departed; and more particularly of kings, who have loved God, and have been loved by him."

We also note in places a tendency of the chronicler to give a free paraphrase, in his own language and style, of certain speeches which he records. For instance, in the words of David, recorded in 1 Chron. xiii, 2, 3; xv, 12, 13; xxii, 7-16; xxviii, 2-10; xxix, 1-5, we find so many of the words and expressions peculiar to the writer of Chronicles as to lead to the conclusion that, while he truthfully presents the sentiments uttered by the great king on the occasions referred to, he has done so largely in his own style and language. It may be doubted, however, whether this peculiarity of the chronicler is really different from what may be found in other sacred writers. We may reasonably suppose that in most of the speeches and prayers occurring in the historical portions of the Old Testament, we have, not an exact and literal transcript of what was originally uttered, but still a truthful presentation of the fundamental thoughts.

The numbers given in Chronicles seem to be peculiarly and almost uniformly extravagant. Compare 1 Chron. xxi, 25; xxii, 14; xxix, 4, 7; 2 Chron. iii, 4; xiii, 3, 17; xiv, 8, 9; xvii, 14-18; xxviii, 8. In many of these passages the reading is no doubt corrupt, and indeed the general condition of the Hebrew text of Chronicles is quite unsatisfactory, more so than that of any other part of the Old Testament.

### Design and Value of the Chronicles.

The preceding investigations have prepared us now to take up the question, Why the Book of Chronicles? What was the writer's object in preparing so extended a history of the chosen people, when there already existed works on the subject in many respects fuller than his own? Some parts of his work are but a repetition of parts of Samuel and Kings, and the lists of names and genealogies seem often to burden his narrative, and render the whole work less interesting and profitable to most readers than other sacred books of Israel. Those interpreters who would find a mystery in every name of Chronicles, and trace in lengthy genealogies a typical history of redemption, will not be likely to gather many followers.

We shall best learn the design of the author by considering the special circumstances and interests of the Jewish people at the time he composed his work. Assuming (what we have already shown to be altogether probable) that the author was Ezra, the priest and scribe profoundly versed in the literature of his people, (Ezra vii, 6, 10,) we may reasonably believe that he discerned among the returned exiles the want of just such a summary of their national history as is furnished in this book, and that the characteristics and peculiarities of the book, above described, will indicate its design and value.

We observe, then, that those for whom this work was specially prepared had recently returned from exile. Their first great work had been to rebuild their temple and their ancient capital. But the masses of the people were greatly lacking in the knowledge of their sacred history and customs. They needed to have their ancient laws expounded, (Neh. viii, 8,) and especially was it important for them to know the origin and claims of the temple worship, the organization and duties of the priests and Levites, and the history of the royal house of David. Further, to the returned exiles few things had greater interest than their ancestral genealogies. For them no better history of the beginnings and earlier development and growth of their nation could be furnished than that of properly arranged tables which traced the lineage of all the great families back to the remotest times, and showed their relation to the most ancient nations.

Accordingly, we find all these things compassed in our author's plan. His genealogies furnished for his readers, whose interests and tastes were peculiarly gratified by such records, a synopsis of their history from the creation of man. His more detailed narrative begins with the reign of David, for under the reign of that monarch Jerusalem was chosen for the seat of government and worship, and the sanctuary service first became permanently organized. The chron-

icler, therefore, dwells at length upon those acts and events in the lives of David and Solomon which centralized the religious worship of Israel, and gave permanency to the throne of David. The removal of the ark to Jerusalem; the organization of the Levites; their classification by orders and by courses, and the arrangements for all departments of the public service; the extensive preparations which David made for building the temple, and his plans which he passed over in his last days to Solomon, with his dying charge to build the temple and carefully maintain the sacred service; the wise choice of Solomon, and his prompt arrangements to erect and dedicate the house of God—these were the matters which Ezra especially desired to make familiar to the returned exiles. And as he proceeded to add to this a short history of the separate kingdom of Judah, he takes particular pains to point out how Jehovah blessed and prospered the kings who put their trust in him and sought to maintain his worship in purity, and also how he visited with misfortunes and disasters those who forsook his laws and countenanced idolatry. He makes especially conspicuous the fact that the ruin of the temple and the kingdom followed directly upon a succession of three wicked kings, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, who seemed to hasten to fill up the cup of Judah's abominations. It was, then, to furnish a convenient record especially of these facts and lessons that our author wrote; and hence it was a part of his plan to omit many things which preceding writers of his nation had furnished, and to give more prominence to other things on which he felt his people needed special information and instruction.

Hence, too, we see the special *value* of the Book of Chronicles. "Such a picture of the past," observes Rawlinson, "a sort of condensed view of the entire previous history, written in the idiom of the day, with frequent allusions to recent events, and in a markedly didactic tone, with a constant reiteration of the moral intended to be taught, was calculated to affect the newly-returned and still unsettled people far more strongly and deeply than the old narratives, written without reference to the existing state of things, in language less familiar, and with less pointedly didactic force. The Book of Chronicles bridged over, so to speak, the gulf which separated the nation after, from the nation before, the captivity, and must have helped greatly to restore the national life, the various strands of which it united with their correspondent threads in the past, while it revived hope and encouraged high aspirations by showing to the nation that its fate was in its own hands, that religious faithfulness would be certain to secure the Divine blessing, and might be counted on to bring back the glories of Asa and Hezekiah."

# Contents.

## SECTION FIRST.

### The Genealogies. 1 Chron. i-ix.

From Adam to Noah.....	i, 1-4	Chief Fathers and Possessions of (east- ern) Manasseh.....	v, 23-24
Sons of Japheth.....	i, 5-7	Captivity of the Eastern Tribes.....	v, 25-26
Sons of Ham.....	i, 8-16	The Sons of Levi.....	vi, 1-58
Sons of Shem.....	i, 17-27	Dwelling-places of the Priests and Le- vites.....	vi, 54-81
Sons of Ishmael.....	i, 29-31	Sons of Issachar.....	vii, 1-8
Sons of Abraham by Keturah.....	i, 32-33	Sons of Benjamin.....	vii, 6-12
Sons of Esau.....	i, 35-42	Sons of Naphtali.....	vii, 13
Kings of Edom.....	i, 43-50	Sons of Manasseh.....	vii, 14-19
Dukes of Edom.....	i, 51-54	Sons and Possessions of Ephraim.....	vii, 20-29
The sons of Israel.....	ii, 1-2	Sons of Asher.....	vii, 30-41
Descendants of Judah.....	ii, 3-55	Sons and Chief Fathers of Benjamin.....	viii, 1-40
The royal line of David.....	iii, 1-24	The first (post-exile) Inhabitants of Je- rusalem.....	ix, 1-18
Other descendants of Judah.....	iv, 1-23	Offices and Duties of the Levites.....	ix, 19-34
Sons and Possessions of Simeon.....	iv, 24-43	Genealogy of Saul's Family.....	ix, 35-44
Sons and Possessions of Reuben.....	v, 1-10		
Sons of Gad.....	v, 11-17		
Hagarite Conquests.....	v, 18-22		

## SECTION SECOND.

### History of David's Reign. 1 Chron. x-xxix.

Fall and Ruin of the House of Saul....	x, 1-14	The Altar on Ornan's Threshing- floor.....	xxi, 18-80
David made King of all Israel.....	xi, 1-3	David's Preparations for Building the Temple.....	xxii, 1-5
Capture of Zion.....	xi, 4-9	His Charge to Solomon.....	xxii, 6-16
David's Mighty Men.....	xi, 10-47	His Charge to the Princes.....	xxii, 17-19
Warriors who joined David at Ziklag.....	xii, 1-7	The Divisions and Duties of the Le- vites.....	xxiii, 1-22
Those who joined him in the Wilder- ness.....	xii, 8-18	The Divisions of the Priests.....	xxiv, 1-19
Manassites who joined him at Ziklag.....	xii, 19-22	Their special Levitical Assistants.....	xxiv, 20-30
Warriors who made David King of all Israel.....	xii, 23-40	The Divisions of the Musicians.....	xxv, 1-31
The Ark removed from Kirjath to the house of Obed-Edom.....	xiii, 1-14	The Divisions of the Porters.....	xxvi, 1-19
David's Palace and Family.....	xiv, 1-7	The Treasurers of the Temple.....	xxvi, 20-28
Victories over the Philistines.....	xiv, 8-17	The Levitical Officers and Judges.....	xxvi, 29-32
Arrangement of the Priests and Le- vites for bearing the Ark.....	xv, 1-24	The Twelve Military Captains.....	xxvii, 1-15
The Ark brought to Zion.....	xv, 25-xvi, 3	Princes of the Tribes.....	xxvii, 16-22
The Singers and the Psalm on that occasion.....	xvi, 4-36	Remark on the Census.....	xxvii, 23-24
The Ministers of the Ark and Altar.....	xvi, 37-43	Officers of the King's Revenue.....	xxvii, 25-31
David's Purpose to Build the Temple.....	xvii, 1-2	David's Counsellors.....	xxvii, 32-34
Jehovah's Word by Nathan.....	xvii, 3-15	David's last National Council.....	xxviii, 1
David's Prayer.....	xvii, 16-27	His Address on the occasion.....	xxviii, 2-8
Summary of David's Victories.....	xviii, 1-13	His Charge to Solomon.....	xxviii, 9, 10
David's Officers.....	xviii, 14-17	The Pattern and Provisions for the Temple.....	xxviii, 11-21
Ammonite and Syrian War.....	xix, 1-19	The King's Labours and Gifts for the Temple.....	xxix, 1-5
Capture of Rabbah.....	xx, 1-3	The Contributions of the Princes.....	xxix, 6, 9
Heroic Feats of Three of David's Men.....	xx, 4-8	David's Prayer on the occasion.....	xxix, 10-13
David's sin in numbering the People and its Punishment.....	xxi, 1-17	Solomon Anointed King.....	xxix, 20, 25
		Close of David's History.....	xxix, 26, 80

## SECTION THIRD.

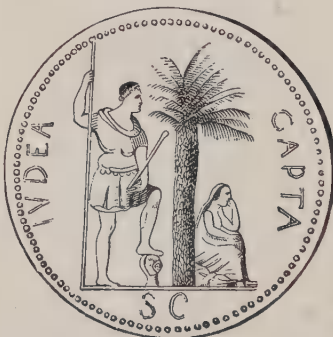
### History of Solomon's Reign. 2 Chron. i-ix.

Solomon's Sacrifice at Gibeon.....	i, 1-12	The Fire from Heaven.....	vii, 1-3
His Riches.....	i, 13-17	The Sacrifices and Feast of Dedication.....	vii, 4-11
Preparations for Building the Temple.....	ii, 1-13	The Lord's Word to Solomon.....	vii, 12-22
The Building of the Temple.....	iii, 1-17	Sundry Acts, showing the general character of Solomon's Reign.....	viii, 1-18
Vessels and Courts of the Temple.....	iv, 1-22	The Queen of Sheba.....	ix, 1-12
The Ark brought into the Temple.....	v, 1-10	Solomon's Riches and Glory.....	ix, 13-28
The Cloud of Divine Glory.....	v, 11-14	Close of Solomon's History.....	ix, 29-31
The Address and Prayer of Dedication.....	vi, 1-42		

## SECTION FOURTH.

## History of the Kingdom of Judah. 2 Chron. x-xxxvi.

The Division of the Kingdom .....	x, 1-19	Death of Jehoiada .....	xxiv, 15-16
Shemaiah's Oracle forbidding Rehoboam to fight with Israel .....	xi, 1-4	Defection and Wickedness of the King and People .....	xxiv, 17-22
Rehoboam's Fortified Cities .....	xi, 5-12	The Syrian Judgment .....	xxiv, 23, 24
The Levites resort to Jerusalem ....	xi, 13-17	Joash Assassinated .....	xxiv, 25-27
Rehoboam's Family .....	xi, 18-23	Reign of Amaziah .....	xxv, 1-23
Shishak's Invasion .....	xii, 1-12	Reign of Uzziah .....	xxvi, 1-23
Rehoboam's Sins and Death .....	xii, 13-16	Reign of Jotham .....	xxvii, 1-9
Abijah's Reign .....	xiii, 1-22	Reign of Ahaz .....	xxviii, 1-27
Asa's Reign auspiciously begun .....	xiv, 1-5	Hezekiah's Reign auspiciously begun	xxix, 1-2
His City, Building, and Military Power	xiv, 6-8	Restoration of the Temple Service .	xxix, 3-36
War with Zerah, the Ethiopian .....	xiv, 9-15	The Celebration of the Passôver....	xxx, 1-27
Azariah's Prophecy .....	xv, 1-7	Destruction of Idolatry .....	xxxi, 1
Asa's Reforms and Renewal of the Covenant .....	xv, 8-19	Reorganization of the Levites. ....	xxxi, 2-21
Asa hires Benhadad to trouble Baasha	xvi, 1-6	Sennacherib's Invasion and Defeat	xxxii, 1-28
Hanan's Oracle and Asa's Wrath ....	xvi, 7-10	Hezekiah's Defection, Riches, and Death .....	xxxii, 24-33
Asa's Disease and Death .....	xvi, 11-14	Manasseh's Wicked Reign .....	xxxiii, 1-20
Jehoshaphat's Piety, Prosperity, and Power .....	xvii, 1-19	Amon's Reign .....	xxxiii, 21-25
His affinity with Ahab, and the Syr- ian Wars .....	xviii, 1-34	Josiah begins to Reign .....	xxxiv, 1, 2
Jehoshaphat rebuked by Jehu .....	xix, 1-3	He Destroys Idolatry .....	xxxiv, 3-7
Jehoshaphat's further Reforms .....	xix, 4-11	He Repairs the Temple .....	xxxiv, 8-18
Victory over Moab and Ammon .....	xx, 1-30	Discovery of the Book of the Law	xxxiv, 14-22
The rest of Jehoshaphat's Reign ....	xx, 31-37	Huldah's Prophecy .....	xxxiv, 23-28
Jehoram's Reign wickedly begun ....	xxi, 1-7	The Law read and the Covenant Renewed .....	xxxiv, 29-33
Revolt of Edom and Libnah .....	xxi, 8-11	The Solemn Passover .....	xxxv, 1-19
The Writing from Elijah .....	xxi, 12-15	Josiah Attacks Necho, and is slain	xxxv, 20-24
Philistine and Arabian Invasion ....	xxi, 16, 17	Close of his History .....	xxxv, 25-27
His Disease and Death .....	xxi, 18-20	Reign of Jehoahaz .....	xxxvi, 1-4
Ahaziah's Reign .....	xxii, 1-9	Reign of Jehoiakim .....	xxxvi, 5-8
Athaliah's Usurpation .....	xxii, 10-12	Reign of Jehoiachin .....	xxxvi, 9-10
Athaliah's Fall and Joash's Eleva- tion to the Throne .....	xxiii, 1-21	Reign of Zedekiah .....	xxxvi, 11-18
Joash Repairs the Temple .....	xxiv, 1-14	Wickedness and Fall of the King- dom of Judah .....	xxxvi, 14-21
		The Proclamation of Cyrus ..	xxxvi, 22, 28



# THE FIRST BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

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## SECTION FIRST. THE GENEALOGIES.

### CHAPTERS I-IX.

#### CHAPTER I.

THE genealogies, for which the Chronicles are specially noted, are to most modern readers the least interesting portions of the Bible. But it should be remembered that to the returned exiles they were of the greatest interest and importance. From Ezra ii, 61-63, we learn that certain "children of the priests" were unable to find a record of their genealogy, and "therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood," and not allowed to "eat of the most holy things." The inheritance of the land was also dependent on one's ability to show his family in Israel, and thus show title to the heritage of his fathers. As the tribe territories and boundaries, which are so carefully detailed in Joshua, have for us little interest, but were of the first importance to ancient Israel, so these genealogies had for the Jews of Ezra's time a value and a charm which we of a distant age and race are not capable of fully appreciating. To the Jew, also, they presented a synopsis of ancestral history, and for all time they will stand a monumental witness to the genuineness of the biblical records. For no man would ever have fabricated these dry lists of names, and so confirm the ancient histories, to which they furnish a sort of index.

In this first chapter we have a collection of genealogies extending from Adam to Israel, placed as an historic background to the Chronicles of the chosen nation. Ten distinguished patriarchs of the primeval world are first named, (verses 1-4,) and then the de-

scendants of the three sons of Noah are so grouped (namely, Japheth, 5-7, Ham, 8-16, Shem, 17-27) as to end with Abram, the great father of the faithful. Abram, however, was the father of many nations, and therefore called Abraham, (verse 27, compare Gen. xvii, 5,) and his descendants through Ishmael and Keturah are named before the sons of Isaac, verses 28-33. The birth of Isaac and the names of his two sons are then formally stated, (verse 34,) and the rest of the chapter is taken up with a list of the descendants of Esau.

These genealogies are all to be found in fuller form in the book of Genesis, chaps. v, x, xi, xxv, xxxvi. Whether they were abridged by our author directly from Genesis, or taken by him from some other book of genealogies, cannot now be determined, but the former supposition is every way probable. "The author has thus shown," observes Wordsworth, "that however other nations might boast of their antiquity, it was the Hebrew nation alone which could trace its origin in an uninterrupted series of links from the creation of man; and that this nation had been preserved amid the ruins of empires, and amid many revolutions and afflictions due to its defections from God."

#### CHAPTER II.

Having disposed of what might be called the pre-Israelitish genealogies, the writer passes directly to that which is his main object, the genealogies of the chief houses of Israel. First come the names of "the twelve patriarchs," (verses 1, 2,) and next, as that which has special interest for the author, the families of the princely tribe of Judah. These Judaic genealogies extend to chap. iv, 23.

The prominence thus given to the house of Judah is in keeping with the writer's purpose of furnishing the sacred history of the house of David, who was the "lion" of that tribe. The records of the tribe of Judah would naturally be of special interest to a Jew returned from the Babylonish exile, and filled with Messianic hopes.

### CHAPTER III.

In this chapter the royal line of David is brought down to several generations beyond Zerubbabel. The list connects naturally with verse 15 of the previous chapter, but our author evidently wished to give a distinct and prominent place to the Davidic register.

The list of David's descendants after Zerubbabel (verses 19-24) has occasioned some difficulty among critics, since it seems to bring the genealogy down to a period as late as the time of Alexander, or even later. This was a point of time later than that at which the Old Testament Canon is supposed to have been finished. But several names may have been added by later editors of the sacred canon; for a few names occurring in such a fragment are not sufficient to settle the question of the date of the entire Book of Chronicles.

But the supposition that the genealogy extends to so late a date is not sufficiently supported. **Hattush**, in verse 22, is doubtless identical with "Hattush of the sons of Shechaniah," mentioned in Ezra viii, 2, 3, who returned with Ezra from Babylon, and who may have lived to see his brother **Neariah's** youngest grandson, **Anani**, verse 24. It is possible also, as Keil suggests, that the **sons of Rephaiah**, etc., (verse 21,) were not descended directly from Zerubbabel, but were branches of the family of David whose exact lines of descent and whose ages it is not now possible to ascertain.

### CHAPTER IV.

Verses 1-23 contain fragmentary genealogies of the descendants of Judah, which the compiler appends, as a kind of supplement to the previous lists. They are, perhaps, the records of sin-

gle Jewish families, which had been preserved through all the years of exile, and were gathered up by our author and inserted with his other tables without any attempt at artificial arrangement or explanation.

The account of **Jabez** in verses 9 and 10 is profoundly interesting and instructive. His connexion with the "families of **Aharhel**" in the previous verse is uncertain, and his founding the scribe-city called by his name in chap. ii, 55, is only a rabbinical conjecture, like the identifying him with **Othniel**, the son of **Kenaz**. We have here but the fragmentary chronicle of a saintly personage of the ancient time. His name commemorates the **sorrow** or **pains** of his mother at his birth, but he **was more honourable than his brethren**, more famous, more devoted to the God of Israel, perhaps more wealthy and powerful. He is specially honoured and distinguished for his comprehensive prayer. In the midst, perhaps, of surrounding idolatry, he **called on the God of Israel**. His prayer has four petitions: 1.) **Bless me**—In his own person, heart, and life, he would have the special benediction of Jehovah. Literally, his words are, *O that blessing thou wouldst bless me!* This blessing he would realize in answer to the petitions which follow. 2.) **Enlarge my coast**—Increase my territorial possessions. Perhaps from being a child of sorrow he had been despised by his brethren, and limited in his possessions; and so he looks, not to man, but to God, to extend his borders. 3.) **Thine hand... with me**—God's *hand* is seen and felt in providential interpositions. Thus **Jehovah** strengthens, encourages, assists. Jabez would have the God of Israel work with him and in his behalf. 4.) **Keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me**—The Lord's prayer ends with this same petition, though expressed in slightly different terms. Matt. vi, 13; Luke xi, 4. Sin and evil are always sure to grieve.

14. **The father of the valley of Charashim**—That is, father of those who dwelt there, and founder, so to speak, of the institution which gave

the place its name. The inhabitants of this valley were **craftsmen**, and were descended from Joab, the son of Seraiah; so the business of engraving and working in wood and metals was the institution of the place. The location of this valley is unknown, but Neh. xi, 35, and the Talmud, would seem to place it in the vicinity of Lod, or Lyda.

**21. The house of them that wrought fine linen**—These descendants of Ashbea were noted for working in linen, or byssus, as the sons of Joab were famed artificers. The writer records the fact as a fragment of ancient tradition, and mentions in the next verse, as if to explain why nothing more is said or known about the matter, that "these are ancient things," old fragments of tradition, whose more minute details are lost.

**23. Dwelt among plants and hedges**—These words should be rendered as proper names, *inhabitants of Netaim and Gederah*. **They dwelt with the king for his work**—They occupied the royal lands and laboured in manual service for the king. In the excavations made at the southeast angle of the Haram enclosure, remains of ancient pottery were found, bearing in Phœnician letters the words, *To King Zepha; King Shat*. On one piece was a part of the word "*Melek*," *king*. On the other pieces the letters had become obliterated.

**39. They went to...Gedor**—So the Simeonites, like the Danites, (Judg. xviii,) enlarged their possessions by conquest. Whether this *Gedor* is the same as that in the mountains of Judah, (Josh. xv, 58,) which Dr. Robinson identifies with Jedur north of Hebron, is uncertain. Ewald proposes to amend by reading, with the Septuagint, *Gerar*, the city where Abraham and Isaac dwelt. Gen. xx, 1; xxvi, 1. But wherever the place, the Simeonites found there the rich pastures they desired, and did not hesitate to destroy the tents of the peaceful occupants, and to take forcible possession of their fields, as the Danites did in the case of the inhabitants of Laish.

**41. The habitations that were**  
VOL. IV.—22

**found there**—Rather, *the Meunim, or Meunites, who were found there*. These seem to have been an Arabian tribe of nomads from the vicinity of Mount Seir. Compare 2 Chron. xxvi, 7.

**43. The Amalekites that were escaped**—Supposed to be those who escaped the sword of Saul and David. 1 Sam. xiv, 48; 2 Sam. viii, 12.

## CHAPTER V.

This chapter treats of the trans-Jordanic tribes, Reuben, Gad, and eastern Manasseh. From it we learn a number of items not elsewhere recorded in the sacred volume.

**1, 2.—His birthright was given unto...Joseph**—This might be readily inferred from the censure of Reuben in Gen. xlix, 4, compared with the ample blessings pronounced on Joseph, (Gen. xlix, 22-26,) and the paternal gift of the "one portion above his brethren," recorded Gen. xlviii, 22; but the transfer of Reuben's birthright to Joseph is nowhere else expressly recorded. The birthright of the first-born entitled its possessor to a double portion of the inheritance, (Deuteronomy xxi, 17,) and Joseph's rights in this regard were conceded in the allotment of Canaan by his receiving the large territory assigned to Ephraim and Manasseh, the latter receiving two portions, one east and the other west of the Jordan. **The genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright**—Joseph's honour in receiving the birthright did not, however, yield him the noblest genealogy, for in this respect **Judah prevailed above his brethren**, and was honoured in being the father of a line of kings the most celebrated in human history. **Of him came the chief ruler**—The princely David, and the magnificent Solomon, and their descendants who reigned at Jerusalem, while dynasty after dynasty rose and fell in the kingdom of Israel, and also in Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia. The chief ruler here doubtless refers particularly to David, but may also point to the prince Messiah, that greatest "ruler in Israel," who came from "among the thousands of Judah." Micah v, 2.

6. **Tilgath-pilneser**—A corrupt orthography, probably by careless copyists, of *Tiglath-pileser*. See on 2 Kings xv, 29.

9. **Unto the entering in of the wilderness**—That is, the Reubenites spread eastward from their original territory beyond Jordan, and occupied the borders of the great Arabian and Syrian deserts that extend between the uplands just east of the Jordan and the great river Euphrates.

10. **The Hagarites**—The same as the *Ishmaelites*, who were all descended from Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian handmaid, and were scattered over the vast deserts between Egypt and Assyria. See on Gen. xxv, 12-18. In this Hagarite war, the Reubenites were assisted by the Gadites and the half tribe of Manasseh. See verses 18-22.

19. **Jetur, and Nephish, and Nodab**—These seem to have been clans of Hagarites, corresponding with the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh among the Israelites. *Jetur* and *Nephish* are named in the genealogy of chap. i, 29-31, and of Gen. xxv, 13-15.

21. **Camels fifty thousand**—The booty taken in this war seems almost incredible; but when we compare the immense wealth in flocks and herds of a single Bedouin chief like Job, (Job i, 3,) or Mesha, (2 Kings iii, 4,) we have reason to believe that the numbers here given are not erroneous.

25. **They transgressed**—Being more widely scattered and Bedouin-like in their habits than the western tribes, these eastern Israelites fell into idolatry sooner than the western tribes, and fell more rapidly, and were accordingly the first to suffer exile.

26. **Pul**—See on 2 Kings xv, 19, 20. **Carried . . . away**—That is, the latter, Tilgath-pilneser, carried them away. According to the account in Kings, Pul was hired by Menahem to withdraw his forces and confirm him in the kingdom, but it is not impossible that on his return through the eastern deserts he also carried off a number of exiles from the exposed eastern tribes. On **Halah . . . Habor . . . Gozan**, see 2 Kings xvii, 6, note. **Hara** is mentioned only here. Some think it is the same as

*Haran*, mentioned in Gen. ii, 31, and 2 Kings xix, 12. Others regard it as the Aramaic form for **הר**, *mountain*, and refer it to some mountainous tract near Gozan.

## CHAPTER VI.

In this chapter we have, first, a genealogy of the sons of Levi, verses 1-53, with some incidental remarks concerning their several offices and works, and secondly, a list of their dwellingplaces. This latter agrees substantially with that of Josh. xxi; the former is in some respects defective, and in other respects more extensive than other recorded genealogies of Levi. The genealogies of Levi were next in importance and interest to those of Judah, and the various scattered lists were doubtless preserved with the greatest care by the returned exiles.

31. **Whom David set over the service of song**—See on chap. xv, 16.

32. **Before the dwellingplace of the tabernacle**—The *dwelling*, (*mishcan*,) as distinguished from the *tabernacle*, (*ohel*,) was the board structure and its covering of ornamented curtains which formed the principal part of the sacred tent. Those who *ministered before the mishcan* must have occupied the court, where the laver and the altar of burnt offering stood. **According to their order**—The order assigned to them by David. On the divisions and arrangement of the sons of Levi, see chaps. xxiii-xxvi.

54. **Throughout their castles**—Rather, *according to their castles, or encampments*. These "castles" are thought by some to have been some kind of watchtower, from which the trumpets were sounded—a use similar to that made by the Moslems of their minarets. But most expositors, as Gesenius, Fürst, Keil, Zöchler, take the word in the sense of *hamlet*, district, or circle of dwellings, such as were assigned to the Levites among the several tribes.

## CHAPTER VII.

This chapter contains fragmentary genealogies of the tribes of Benjamin, Issachar, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim.

and Asher, with some observations on the valour of the sons of Issachar and Asher, and on a certain calamity of Ephraim. This last named incident (verses 21, 22) is a mere fragment of tradition, and has been variously explained. The statement is, that two sons of Ephraim, Ezer and Elead, were slain by the men of Gath that were born in that land... because they came down to take away their cattle. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him. When did this event take place? Two answers only demand our notice: 1.) The older interpreters generally refer it to the time of Israel's sojourn in Egypt, while the patriarch Ephraim was still alive. Ezer and Elead went from Goshen in Egypt, down to Gath, and were slain in an attempt to drive off the cattle of the Gathites. 2.) Keil, with other modern critics, object that an excursion from Goshen to Gath could not properly be called a *going down*, and they suppose the event occurred after Israel's settlement in the Land of Promise. Thus the men of Gath are said to be *born in the land*, in distinction from the Ephraimites and other Israelites, who were not born in Palestine; and an excursion from Mount Ephraim to the Philistine plain would be a descent. Accordingly, the Ephraim here named was not the son of Joseph, who was born in Egypt, but a later descendant, who, like many others, bore the name of the father of their tribe; and the genealogy of vs. 25-27, from Rephah to Joshua, is not to be understood as running on from this Ephraim. This latter view is, perhaps, the most probable, but the obscure and fragmentary character of this document is such that no conclusive argument can be brought for or against either of these views.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

The Benjaminite families registered in this chapter are supposed by Keil to have been separated from those of chap. vii, 6-11, because they were derived from another genealogical document. It is also probable, as Rawlin-

son suggests, that the writer had in view the historical portion of his work that commences with chapter x. "As the history is to begin with Saul, the genealogical portion is made to end with an account of the family of this Benjaminite monarch." Compare verses 29-38, with chap. ix, 35-44. The tribe of Benjamin was more fortunate in preserving its records than were many of the tribes of Israel. Saul of Tarsus was able, as late as the New Testament times, to trace his lineage back to Benjamin. Rom. xi, 1; Phil. iii, 5.

#### CHAPTER IX.

There is a noticeable resemblance between the list of the inhabitants of Jerusalem here given, (verses 2-17,) and that which is recorded in Neh. xi. Both lists agree in their general plan, and in a considerable number of their names, but otherwise they differ much. These correspondences and differences have led to three different opinions as to their relation to each other. 1.) Both lists are to be referred to the same time, and were derived from a common source, namely, an older document, which contained a fuller list of names, and was every way more complete than either of these. The writers of these lists, accordingly, selected from the fuller document before them only such names and facts as suited each his particular purpose. 2.) Keil holds that the present list refers to the population of Jerusalem before the exile, and that of Nehemiah to a period subsequent to the return from exile. 3.) A third opinion is, that this list is, according to verse 2, a register of "the first inhabitants" who settled in Jerusalem after the exile, while that of Nehemiah belongs to the later times of Nehemiah himself, and speaks of those who dwell in neighbouring cities as well as those who dwell in Jerusalem. This opinion seems, on the whole, to be the best sustained.

2. **Israelites... priests... Levites... Nethinim**—Four classes of inhabitants. **The Israelites** here denote the mass of the people, the laity, as distinguished from the three classes next named. **The Nethinim**—*The*

*given ones.* Hebrew, נְתִינִים; Septuagint οἱ δεδομένοι. Here this name first occurs as an appellative, though the participle *Nethinim*, (נְתִינִים,) from the same root, is applied to the Levites of the time of Moses. Num. iii, 9; viii, 19. The Levites were given to Aaron and his sons to do service in the tabernacle. At a later time a number of captive Midianites were given to the Levites to assist them in the charge of the tabernacle, (Num. xxxi, 47;) and still later the Gibeonites were also given to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord." Josh. ix, 27. Jewish tradition regards the Nethinim as descendants of those ancient Gibeonitish sanctuary slaves, so that they seem ever to have borne the stigma of a Canaanitish origin. Their work was to perform the menial and laborious service connected with the sanctuary, such as carrying wood and water, and any similar labour which the Levites might require of them. "The only period at which they rise into any thing like prominence, is that of the return from the captivity. In that return the priests were conspicuous and numerous; but the Levites, for some reason unknown to us, hung back. Under Zerubbabel there were but three hundred and forty-one Levites to four thousand two hundred and eighty-nine priests. Ezra ii, 36-42. Under Ezra none came up till after a special call. Ezra viii, 15. The services of the Nethinim were consequently of more importance, but in their case, also, the small number of those that joined indicates that many preferred remaining in the land of their exile to returning to their old service. Those that did come were consequently thought worthy of special mention. The names of their families were registered with as much care as those of the priests. Ezra ii, 43-58. They were admitted, in strict conformity to the letter of the rule of Deut. xxix, 11, to join in the great covenant with which the restored people inaugurated its new life. Neh. x, 28. They, like the priests and Levites, were exempted from taxation by the Persian satraps. Ezra vii, 24.

They were also under the control of a chief of their own body. Ezra ii, 43; Neh. vii, 46. They took an active part in the work of rebuilding the city. (Nehemiah iii, 26,) and the tower of Ophel was assigned to some of them as a residence, (Neh. xi, 21,) while others dwelt with the Levites in their cities. Ezra ii, 70. They took their place in the chronicles of the time as next in order to the Levites."—SMITH'S *Bib. Dict.*

#### 11. Ruler of the house of God—

A designation of the high priest, as by virtue of his office intrusted with the chief authority and control over the temple. The title seems also to have been given to some who were not high priests, (Jer. xx, 1,) but held a secondary rank, and had charge of the temple-police and guards. "The Rabbies," says Hervey, "speak very frequently of one second in dignity to the high priest, whom they call the *sagan*, and who often acted in the high priest's room. He is the same who is called "the second priest." 2 Kings xxiii, 4; xxv, 18. They say Moses was *sagan* to Aaron. Thus, too, it is explained of Annas and Caiaphas, (Luke iii, 2,) that Annas was *sagan*. In like manner they say Zadok and Abiathar were high priest and *sagan* in the time of David. The *sagan* is also very frequently called *memunneh*, or prefect of the temple, and upon him chiefly lay the care and charge of the temple services. If the high priest was incapacitated from officiating by any accidental uncleanness, the *sagan* took his place."

18. **Porters**—Gate or doorkeepers, whose work it was to open, close, and guard the entrances to the sanctuary. Theirs was a responsible office, and none but Levites were intrusted with its duties. The honour attaching to this position is enhanced by the statements of the following verses. Their fathers in the ancient time were intrusted with this noble service, "being over the host of the Lord," that is, the encampment of his people in the wilderness, and even the distinguished "Phinehas the son of Eleazar" was their ruler in that ancient time.

22. **Whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain**—This statement

adds further to the dignity and honour of the office of the porters. But Samuel the seer was dead long before David reorganized and arranged the various departments of the sanctuary service, and so this passage is to be understood of Samuel's indirect assistance in the matter, either by planning and advising with David on the subject during his lifetime, or, as is more probable, by actually taking measures to organize and arrange the Levites for service during the reign of Saul. "The mention of Samuel after David," says Keil, "has not a chronological signification, but David is named first on account of his connexion with the matter in hand, for the thorough reorganization of the worship, and the classification of the persons engaged in carrying it on, originated with David. For these arrangements of David, however, Samuel had prepared the way in his struggle for the restoration of the theocracy, and of the worship which had fallen into desuetude under Eli and his profligate sons. To do this in any measure he must have, without doubt, ordained trustworthy men to the individual offices, and thus have prepared the way for King David."

23. **By wards**—Rather, *for a guard*.

28. **The ministering vessels**—As these seem to be distinguished from the ordinary vessels of the sanctuary mentioned in the next verse, they are understood by Bertheau and Keil to be the peculiarly costly vessels; for example, "the golden cups for the libations, etc., which were brought from the treasure chamber only for a short time for use in the service." **By tale**—Or, *by number*. They were carefully numbered, both when brought in and taken out, lest any one of them should become lost or missing.

29. **All the instruments of the sanctuary**—Such as are enumerated in 1 Kings vii, 45–50. **Fine flour . . . wine . . . oil . . . frankincense . . . spices**—Compare Exod. xxv, 6; xxix, 40; xxx, 23–38; Lev. ii, 2; xxiii, 13; Num. xv, 5.

31. **Things that were made in the pans**—The meat or bread offerings. See on Lev. ii, 4–7.

32. **Showbread**—See Lev. xxiv, 5–9.

35–44. This register is substantially identical with that of chap. viii, 29–38, and is repeated here to form a transition to the account of Saul's death, which the writer inserts, in chap. x, as an introduction to the history of David's reign. Keil thinks the two documents were derived from different sources, and thus accounts for their slight differences; while others think the differences have arisen from corruptions in the text, and in some cases, perhaps, by design of the compiler himself.

## SECTION SECOND.

### THE HISTORY OF DAVID'S REIGN.

#### CHAPTERS X–XXIX.

#### CHAPTER X.

Having completed his lists of genealogies, the writer proceeds to introduce us to the history of David's kingship by giving a brief account of the fall and ruin of the house of Saul. The narrative in this chapter is nearly identical with that of 1 Sam. xxxi, where see notes. In the points wherein they differ, one narrative supplements the other. Hence it appears that the chronicler drew from other sources besides the books of Samuel.

6. **All his house died together**—Not every member of his family, for Ishbosheth, (2 Sam. ii, 8,) and Ziba, and Mephibosheth (2 Sam. ix, 1–6) survived him; but all his men that accompanied him to the war.

10. **They . . . fastened his head in the temple of Dagon**—In Samuel we are merely told that "they cut off his head," but no account is there given of what they did with it. This act of the Philistines was, perhaps, a retaliation for the disposition made of the head of Goliath. 1 Sam. xvii, 54.

12. **Buried their bones under the oak in Jabesh**—Samuel has, "under a tree," or rather, *under the tree*, (הָאֵשֶׁל), that is, some well-known tree which this writer designates as הָאֵלֶךְ, *the oak*, or *terebinth*.

13. **So Saul died for his transgression . . . and also for asking counsel of . . . a familiar spirit**—

These reflections on the death of Saul, and the causes of his fall, show that the writer is merely preparing the way to the history of David. Saul's ruin is attributed particularly to two great sins: 1) in not observing Jehovah's word, which enjoined upon him the destruction of Amalek, (see 1 Sam. xv, and xxviii, 17, 18, and notes there;) 2) in seeking for help and counsel of the witch of Endor. See 1 Sam. xxviii, 3-20, notes.

**14. Inquired not of the Lord—**1 Sam. xxviii, 6 clearly implies that he did inquire of the Lord, but received no answer. His inquiring of Jehovah, however, seems to have been fitful, superstitious, and prompted by a sense of terror, and also with a conviction that he was forsaken of God, (1 Samuel xxviii, 15;) and being followed so speedily by a resolution to inquire of a necromancer, it is treated by the chronicler as no true, earnest, and worthy inquiring of Jehovah. **He slew him—**Heb. *caused him to die*; that is, gave him over to destruction, as a vessel of wrath already fitted to that end. Rom. ix, 22, note.

### CHAPTER XI.

This chapter is parallel with 2 Sam. v, 1-10; xxiii, 8-39; and the reader is referred to the comments on those passages. The text in the one book often supplements and throws light on its parallel in the other. The chronicler, with noticeable fondness for preserving genealogies and lists of Israelitish worthies, inserts this catalogue of David's mighty men here, (verses 10-47,) inasmuch as they had so much to do in establishing him in his kingdom. Such is the import of verse 10, "who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, and with all Israel, to make him king." That is, they stood firmly by him and maintained his cause during all the trying periods of his reign, as well as at the time when he was made king.

### CHAPTER XII.

In this chapter we have a number of records that have been nowhere else preserved. They serve as interesting supplements to 1 Sam. xxii, 2; xxvii, 7;

xxix, 11; and 2 Sam. ii, 3, and in form us of a number of notable heroes who resorted unto David at different periods of his career. First we have a list of those who came to him at Ziklag. Verses 1-7. Next a list of Gadites, and men of Benjamin and Judah, who joined him in the desert. Vers. 8-18. Then a list of Manassites, who joined him on his return to Ziklag after having accompanied the Philistines to the war against Saul, (vers. 19-22;) and finally a record of the number of those from various tribes who helped to make David king at Hebron. Vers. 23-40.

**1. Ziklag—**See on 1 Sam. xxvii, 5-12. **While he yet kept himself close because of Saul—**Rather, *while he was yet shut up from the presence of Saul*; that is, during the time of his exile, when, on account of Saul's designs against his life, (1 Sam. xxvii, 1,) he dared not appear in the presence of that monarch, nor publicly move through the coasts of Israel. **Helpers of the war—**Assistants of David in such wars as are referred to in verses 15, 21; 1 Sam. xxiii, 5; xxvii, 8; xxx, 8-18.

**2. Could use both the right hand and the left—**Hence their skill had been acquired by long and careful practice. See Judges iii, 15; xx, 16, notes. **Even of Saul's brethren—**That is, who were members of his own tribe. Even these revolted from Saul, and cast in their lot with David.

**8. The Gadites . . . unto David into the hold to the wilderness—**The "hold" here referred to is most probably the cave of Adullam; see on 1 Sam. xxii, 1-2. It may, however, be understood generally of the several holds or fastnesses in which David hid himself at various times.

**14. One of the least was over a hundred, and the greatest over a thousand—**Thus the Vulgate; but the marginal reading gives the sense of the Hebrew: *One that was least could resist a hundred, and the greatest a thousand*. The least or smallest of these heroes was able to cope with a hundred ordinary men, while the mightiest could maintain battle with a thousand. The expression is to be regarded as pro-

verbal. Comp. Lev. xxvi, 8; Deut. xxxii, 30; Josh. xxiii, 10.

**15. These**—Namely, these Gadites. The writer thus gives in this verse an instance of their valour. **Went over Jordan in the first month**—That is, in Abib, (April,) when the river usually overflows all its banks, and the crossing is both difficult and dangerous. **Put to flight all them of the valleys**—This expedition of the Gadites was, perhaps, a mere scheme of predatory conquest; or, it may have been undertaken to punish the people of these valleys for marauding expeditions they had carried on. If, however, we should understand "the hold" of verse 8 to be that of Mizpeh of Moab, where David dwelt awhile, (1 Sam. xxii, 3-5,) this exploit of the Gadites may have taken place at the time they separated themselves from the rest of the Gadites. In resorting unto David they may have met with opposition from Saul's partisans, and were therefore obliged to fight their way through the valleys east and west of the Jordan.

**17. If ye be come to betray me to mine enemies**—Here we observe an instance of David's caution and reserve. He had some suspicion that these men of Benjamin and Judah might be crafty emissaries from Saul.

**18. The spirit came upon Amasai**—Heb. *clothed Amasai*, that is, enwrapped him as with armour. See note on Judg. vi, 34. **Thine are we, David**—This speech of Amasai is full of emotion, and rises to poetic parallelism.

To thee, O David!  
And with thee, O son of Jesse!  
Peace, peace unto thee,  
And peace unto thy helpers;  
For helpeth thee thy God.

**19. There fell some of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul**—On David's connexion with this war, see 1 Sam. xxviii, 1-2; xxix, 1-11. As the march with the Philistines led David through the territory of Manasseh, it was easy for members of this tribe to join him as he returned to Ziklag.

**21. They helped David against the band**—The predatory horde of Amalekites, which, during David's ab-

sence, had fallen upon Ziklag, and taken the women and children captive. See 1 Sam. xxx.

**22. A great host, like the host of God**—That is, strong, mighty, glorious. Compare "hill of God," Psalm lxviii, 15, "cedars of God," Psa. lxxx, 10, margin; "city of God," Jonah iii, 3, margin.

**LIST OF WARRIORS WHO MADE DAVID KING OF ALL ISRAEL, 23-40.**

This list is a most interesting and important document in the annals of David. It indicates the proportion of sympathy and help (the number of votes, so to speak) he received from the various tribes at the time referred to in chapter xi, 1-3, when "all Israel gathered themselves to David unto Hebron," to transfer to his hands the kingdom of Saul. Bertheau thinks that we have here only an extract from a complete list which contained the names and number of the chiefs, and also the number of warriors. This, however, is uncertain. The list may, indeed, have undergone some corruption, but it contains so many evidences of genuineness that we may well regard it as in the main a faithful copy.

**23. The numbers of the bands**—Literally, *the numbers of the heads*. This the Septuagint and Vulgate take in the sense of the number of chiefs, or captains; but as the following list is devoted chiefly to the numbers of the warriors, it is better to understand the word (*רָאשֵׁי*) as our translators have rendered it, *bands*, or *companies*, as it is rendered in Judg. vii, 16, 20; ix, 34; 1 Sam. xi, 11.

**24. Judah... six thousand and eight hundred**—It has been thought strange that David's own tribe should have had so small a representation in comparison with remote tribes like Zebulun, Naphtali, and Asher. Compare verses 33, 34, 36. But David had already ruled over Judah seven years, and on this occasion it was unnecessary for his own tribe to be present in great numbers. The same remarks apply to the tribe of Simeon, which had already become largely identified with that of Judah.

**26. Levi four thousand and six hundred**—These came from the various Levitical cities. They were not reckoned among the warriors of the nation, (Num. i, 47,) but came as representatives of their tribe to confirm the covenant with David.

**27. Jehoiada was the leader of the Aaronites**—Not high priest, but civil ruler and tribal representative.

**28. Zadok**—Not necessarily the high priest of this name.

**29. Benjamin . . . three thousand**—

A very great number could hardly be expected on this occasion from the tribe of Saul. Hence the writer adds, that **hitherto**, that is, up to that time, **the greatest part of them had kept the ward** (rather, *were keeping charge*) **of the house of Saul**. They still were adhering in sympathy and attachment to the house of their fallen king.

**31. Expressed by name**—These representatives of Manasseh were duly elected and designated by name to go and make David king.

**32. That had understanding . . . to know what Israel ought to do**—These representatives of Issachar displayed superior judgment on this occasion in estimating the circumstances of the times, and discerning the course of action Israel should pursue.

**33. Zebulun . . . expert in war . . . fifty thousand**—Their numbers and prowess were still in keeping with their ancient fame acquired in the war with Sisera, Judges v, 18. **Which could keep rank . . . not of double heart**—This should all be taken together as a single sentence, *who set the battle in array with no double heart*. The word rendered *keep rank*, occurs only here and in verse 38. Our version seems to have hit the true meaning, but not to have expressed it clearly. The thought is, that the Zebulunite warriors were skillful in falling into rank, or arranging themselves in battle array. They were trained to do this without the least wavering or hesitation, (literally, *not with heart and heart*), but with a firm and single mind.

**38. The rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king**—That is, they made no opposition, and

raised no remonstrance. How much so ever some lacked sympathy for David, and mourned over the lost cause of Saul, all were convinced in their hearts that David was the divinely chosen king.

**39. Three days, eating and drinking**—It was a day of joy to all the land, and the great assembly at Hebron did well to celebrate it with abundant festivity.

**40. Even unto Issachar**—Not only the tribes near Hebron, but those on the far off northern frontier contributed provisions for this great national feast.

The numbers of this list amount to 340,822, including 8,322 Levites and priests. When now we remember that the nation numbered 600,000 warriors in the time of Moses, (Numbers i, 46,) and 800,000 (besides the 500,000 of Judah) in the last years of David's reign, (2 Sam. xxiv, 9,) it seems probable that the numbers of the present list, both in the aggregate and in detail, are substantially correct. We need not suppose that all the warriors of all the tribes went to Hebron to make David king, but that about 300,000 appeared on that occasion is every way probable. With this vast host of warriors the newly elected king of "all Israel" proceeded at once to the conquest of Jerusalem. See chap. xi, 1-9.

## CHAPTER XIII.

The contents of this chapter coincide with 2 Sam. vi, 1-11, where see notes. This narrative, however, adds to that of Samuel in the mention of David's consulting with his captains, and assembling all Israel "from Shinor of Egypt even unto the entering of Hemath," verse 5. Shihor is probably the Wady el Arish, (see on Josh. xiii, 3,) and on "the entering of Hemath," see note on Josh. xiii, 5.

**9. Threshingfloor of Chidon**—The reading in 2 Sam. vi, 6, is *Nachon's threshingfloor*. *Chidon* may be another name for *Nachon*, or it may be a corruption of the name *Nachon*, כידון—כידון.

## CHAPTER XIV.

This chapter is nearly the same as 2 Sam. v, 11-25, where see notes.

## CHAPTER XV.

In this chapter we have a detailed account of the transfer of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem. It corresponds with 2 Sam. vi, 12-23, but is a fuller account, and records the prominence of the priests and Levites in the transaction.

1. **Made him houses**—Continued the work of building and fortifying mentioned in chap. xi, 8. **Prepared a place for the ark of God**—A suitable site on Zion. **A tent**—A new tabernacle on the newly selected site. See note on 2 Sam. ii, 6-17.

2. **None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites**—See Num. i, 50. The neglect or forgetfulness of this fact was the cause of the misfortune attending the previous attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem, and severely had God punished the error. Compare verse 13 and chapter xiii.

16. **David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music**—Already many of the Levites were skilled in vocal and instrumental music, otherwise they could not, upon so short a notice, have entered at once upon the service of song to which David called them. But sacred music had long been cultivated in Israel, and the schools of the prophets had probably carried it to a considerable degree of perfection. It is possible that some kind of musical service had also already become a part of the tabernacle worship, but it seems to have been the exalted genius of David that first made it a fixed and permanent part of Levitical service; and the new régime was appropriately inaugurated with the removal of the ark to its new tabernacle in Jerusalem. On the musical instruments here named see notes at 1 Sam. x, 5; 2 Sam. vi, 5.

17. **Heman... Asaph... Ethan**—These three distinguished Levites became immortalized in sacred history by this appointment as chief musicians. Each of the three great divisions of the tribe of Levi had thus a representative family in the choir. Their genealogy is given in chap. vi, 31-47. At the close of David's reign the Levitical

musicians numbered four thousand. Chap. xxiii, 5.

18. **Their brethren of the second degree**—Second in rank and dignity to the three chief musicians.

19-21. The singers were divided into three choirs, or companies: 1.) The three chiefs, who used **cymbals of brass**; 2.) Eight others played **with psalteries on Alamoth**; 3.) Six others played **with harps on the Sheminith to excel**. The words *on Alamoth*, and *on the Sheminith*, are of doubtful meaning. Some understand them as the names of musical instruments; others as the names of different tunes, or of different melodies. *Alamoth* means *virgins*, and *Sheminith* means the *eighth*, hence Keil explains *on Alamoth*, "after the manner of virgins, that is, in the soprano;" and *on the Sheminith*, "after the octave, that is, in bass." Our acquaintance with the music of the ancient Hebrews is too limited to decide the meaning of these and kindred terms. These and similar words occur at the beginning of many of the psalms. **To excel**—Rather, *to lead*; to take the lead in the music.

22. **Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song**—Chenaniah was not chief of the Levitical singers, for we have just been told that Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, were the leaders in that department. Hence we regard the rendering *for song* as an error. The Hebrew is כְּבִמְשָׁה, *in the burden*; that is, the burden of bearing the ark. In Num. iv, 15, the duty of bearing the sanctuary and its sacred vessels is expressly called "the burden (מִשָּׁה) of the sons of Kohath." **He instructed about the song**—Rather, *he gave instruction about the burden*; that is, he gave the proper orders and instructions about the bearing of the ark. The whole verse should accordingly be rendered: *Chenaniah, a prince of the Levites, was in charge of the burden; he gave instruction in respect to the burden, for he was skillful*. David carefully guarded this time against carelessness and ignorance in the matter of removing the ark, by putting the matter in charge of a prince of the Levites who possessed the requisite knowledge and

skill to superintend the responsible burden.

**23. Doorkeepers for the ark**—Whose duty it was to see that no one profanely touched the ark, or attempted, like the men of Beth-shemesh, (1 Sam. vi, 19,) to uncover and look into it.

**26 When God helped the Levites**—By enabling them to remove the ark six paces without injury to any one. Comp. 2 Sam. vi, 13. The death of Uzzah had inspired a fear that Jehovah might not again allow them to remove the ark at all, but as soon as this fear appears to be groundless they offer sacrifice to God.

**27. The master of the song**—Rather, *prince of the burden*. See note above on verse 22. **With the singers**—There is no *with* in the Hebrew, and the word *singers* is probably an interpolation, being a repetition from the previous line made by some ancient transcriber.

## CHAPTER XVI.

This chapter continues and concludes the account of the removal of the ark to Zion. Verses 1-3 and 43 are identical with 2 Sam. vi, 17-19, where see notes. The passage from verse 4 to verse 42 is added by the chronicler, and "contains a detailed account of the service which David instituted at this time; a service out of which grew the more elaborate service of the temple. The language of much of the passage is remarkably archaic, and there can be no reasonable doubt that it is in the main an extract from a record of the time of David."—*Rawlinson*.

**4. To record, and to thank and praise**—The verb rendered to *record* is the same as that in the titles of Psalms xxxviii and lxx, where it is rendered to *bring to remembrance*. The contents of those psalms are a *memorial* to God of the penitence, sufferings, and dangers of a tempted soul. So, along with thanksgiving and praise, the Levites were also to memorialize Jehovah of Israel's needs and sorrows by the use of such penitential psalms.

**7. On that day David delivered first this psalm**—This statement seems

clearly to settle the question of the origin of the psalm that follows. A number of critics, in spite of this statement of the chronicler, maintain that the psalm was compiled from extracts of psalms already existing and familiar to the Israelites. Verses 8-22 are found again in Psa. cv, 1-15; verses 23-33 are nearly the same as Psa. cxvi; and verses 34-36 agree with Psalm cvi, 1, 47, 48. A number of expressions in this book are more archaic than are the corresponding ones in the psalms named; and while some differences may seem to bespeak a greater antiquity for the psalms, they are more than counterbalanced by the above positive assertion of the chronicler. We therefore, with Keil, regard this psalm, as it stands in this book, as the original poem, from which the parts of the several psalms above mentioned were subsequently derived. Our common English version is so faithful to the Hebrew text as to call for no revision in these notes, and textual comment will be found at the corresponding passages in the notes on the psalms.

**39. Zadok the priest, and his brethren the priests, before the tabernacle... at Gibeon**—The tabernacle had probably been removed to the high place at Gibeon soon after the slaughter of the priests at Nob, 1 Sam. xxii, 19; and Zadok had, perhaps, been appointed high priest during the latter years of Saul's reign. So David did not interfere with the worship at Gibeon, but *left* (verse 37) Zadok there to minister as high priest, and to carry on the regular tabernacle service and the offering of burnt offerings. At the same time, however, he provided for a regular service before the ark in the new tabernacle on Zion, and thus furnished a charge for Abiathar, his old friend, and faithful companion in the days of his exile. 1 Sam. xxii, 20-23. Thus matters continued until the time of Solomon, who deposed Abiathar, (1 Kings ii, 26,) and after the building of the temple transferred all the sanctuary service thither. 1 Kings viii, 4. Comp. note on 2 Sam. vi, 17.

**41. Jeduthun**—The same as Ethan of chap. vi, 44, and xv, 17, 19. Comp.

chap. xxv, 1, 6; 2 Chron. v, 12; xxix, 14; xxxv, 15.

### CHAPTER XVII.

With the exception of a few verbal differences, this chapter is identical with 2 Sam. vii, where see notes.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

This chapter is parallel to 2 Sam. viii, where see notes.

### CHAPTER XIX.

Compare this chapter with its parallel in 2 Sam. x, and see notes there.

### CHAPTER XX.

Of this chapter, verse 1 is parallel with 2 Sam. xi, 1, and xii, 27; verses 2, 3 with 2 Sam. xii, 30, 31; and verses 4-8 with 2 Sam. xxi, 19-22. See notes on these passages in Samuel. Observe here how the chronicler makes no mention of David's sin "in the matter of Uriah the Hittite."

### CHAPTER XXI.

"This chapter," observes Rawlinson, "covers the same ground as the last chapter of 2 Samuel, but continues the narrative somewhat further, the last four verses (27-30) and the latter part of verse 26 being additional to the earlier account. The resemblance to Samuel is throughout less close than usual; the additions are more numerous, the supernatural circumstances of the narrative being brought out into greater prominence, and some remarkable touches of a miraculous character, which are wholly new, being appended. The history is evidently not drawn from Samuel, but from some quite separate document, probably a contemporary account of the occurrence drawn up by Gad." In this, however, as in other cases, the parallel passages in the different books mutually supplement each other. See notes on 2 Sam. xxiv.

6. **Levi and Benjamin counted he not**—The Levites were not numbered by Moses in obedience to the command which was given at Sinai, "Thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel." Num. i, 49.

Because of this command they were not reckoned by David. The Benjaminites were not numbered, probably, as Bertheau explains, because the numbering was stopped before the census of that tribe was taken. The writer gives as a reason that **the king's word was abominable to Joab**. Joab discerned at the beginning of the matter that it was fraught with evil omen, (see on 2 Sam. xxiv, 3,) and his opposition to the measure served, probably, to stop the census sooner than would otherwise have been the case. The coming of the pestilence put an effectual stop to Joab's work. Chap. xxvii, 24.

29. **The tabernacle . . . and the altar . . . at Gibeon**—See note on chap. xvi, 39.

30. **David could not go before it to inquire of God: for he was afraid because of the sword of the angel**—It was a moral and spiritual, not a physical cause, that hindered David from going to Gibeon. Gibeon had probably not been spared by the pestilence, and the fear inspired by the sight of the angel, together with the command to build an altar and sacrifice on the spot where the angel appeared, convinced the king that thenceforth he must offer his sacrifices on the threshing-floor of Ornan. Hence he could not go elsewhere to sacrifice without violating his convictions of duty and obedience. He may also have feared that any disregard of the command to sacrifice on this new spot would cause the sword of the destroying angel to appear again. With this verse the first verse of the next chapter should be connected. Convinced by a Divine revelation that this spot was chosen by God as a place for sacrifice, he proclaimed, "This is the house of the Lord God, and this is the altar of the burnt offering for Israel." Here at length he found the spot on which the temple should be built.

### CHAPTER XXII.

The remaining chapters of 1 Chronicles form a connecting link between the books of Samuel and Kings, and supply us with much information not elsewhere given respecting David's

preparations for building the temple, his arrangements of the priests and Levites and the officers of the realm, and his counsels to Solomon and to Israel. They form altogether a concluding chapter to the history of David, and treat of matters of peculiar interest to the writer of Chronicles—matters largely ecclesiastical—to give special prominence to which was evidently a main object of his writing.

1. **Then David said**—See note on the last verse of the preceding chapter.

2. **David commanded to gather together the strangers**—These *strangers* were the descendants of the old Canaanitish population of the land, whom the Israelites had not been able to expel. Comp. 1 Kings ix, 21, and 2 Chron. ii, 17. Having settled on the site of Jehovah's house, the king was stimulated to make, in his last days, all possible preparations for the building of the same. **Masons to hew wrought stones**—Or, *stonecutters to cut hewn stones*. Compare 1 Kings v, 15, 17.

3. **Nails for the doors of the gates**—"That is, for the folding doors of the gates; partly for the pivots on which the folding doors turned, partly to strengthen the boards of which the doors were made."—*Keil*. **For the joinings**—For cramps, or iron holders to fasten and hold beams and stones together. **Without weight**—The bulk and amount was so great as not to be easily weighed. As we sometimes familiarly say, "There was no weighing it."

4. **Cedar trees . . . Zidonians**—See note on 1 Kings v, 6.

5. **Young and tender**—A youth of probably less than twenty years. See on 1 Kings iii, 7. **Exceeding magnificent, of fame and of glory**—Literally, *the house to be builded to Jehovah is to be made great to an exceeding extent, for a name and for an ornament to all the lands*. David had a most exalted and worthy conception of the grandeur and importance of the temple to be builded. Not only was it to be a most magnificent structure, but it was to magnify Jehovah's name and praise among the nations. Thus the monarch

of Israel breathed the spirit of later prophecies, which foreshadowed the spiritual glory of the Christian temple, and according to which "the mountain of the Lord's house should be established in the top of the mountains, and exalted above the hills; and all nations flow unto it." Isaiah ii, 2; Micah iv, 1.

6-16. David's charge to Solomon, here recorded, belongs to the same period as that of 1 Kings ii, 1-10. One passage supplements the other, and the contrast between them is very noticeable. The writer of Kings was concerned more particularly with the political history of David, and records the aged king's counsel to his son in reference to dangerous political enemies; the chronicler omits all that, and records only the charge of David respecting the building of the temple.

7. **It was in my mind to build**—See at Sam. vii, 1-17, and chap. xvii, 1-15.

8. **The word of the Lord came to me**—Probably by Nathan, but not at the time referred to in chap. xvii, 3, and 2 Sam. vii, 4. At that time Jehovah opened to David's prophetic eye that Messianic future which ever after was his joy and song; but at another time he sent Nathan again to explain to him the reason, as here given, why he should not build the temple of Jehovah. **Because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight**—

The wars of David were not carried on against God's will. In many cases they were expressly ordered by Jehovah, and often called the "wars of the Lord." In order to the establishment of Israel in Canaan wars and bloodshed were unavoidable. Nevertheless, the bloodshed and barbarity of war were not in harmony with the profound symbolism of peace, sabbatic quiet, and thoughtful repose, which were to be embodied in the house of Jehovah. Hence David's unfitness to build the temple. Comp. 1 Kings v, 3.

9. **His name shall be Solomon**—See note on 2 Sam. xii, 24, 25.

14. **In my trouble I have prepared for the house**—Margin, *in my poverty*. So also Septuagint and Vulgate. Bertheau and Keil, *by my pain*.

*ful labour*; that is, by great toil and effort on my part. The word thus variously rendered generally means *affliction, distress*; and such is, probably, the sense in which it should here be taken. David means to say that under varied circumstances of trouble, warfare, and distress, he had accumulated the treasures he here enumerates. **A hundred thousand talents of gold**—About \$5,690,000,000. **A thousand thousand talents of silver**—About \$1,660,000,000. These numbers are incredibly large, and unless the value of the talent in question was vastly less than that at which the Hebrew talent is commonly estimated, the statement of the text is probably extravagant. Bertheau thinks the writer merely meant to designate an extraordinary amount, and made a free use of numbers without any close estimate of the precise amount. Keil, however, thinks the numbers may not be exaggerated; but, reckoning the talent at half the usual standard, ("according to the king's weight," 2 Samuel xiv, 26,) and appealing to the enormous amounts of treasure often accumulated in ancient kingdoms, he concludes that the "shields of gold," and other similar spoil which David captured in war, (2 Sam. viii, 7-11; chap. xviii, 11,) may not have been improperly valued at the figures here used.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

**1. When David was old...he made Solomon his son king**—This statement serves as an introduction to the account of the arrangement of the Levites which follows. David, in his old age, made arrangements to hand over to his son a well-organized theocracy. Chapters xxiii-xxvii show how thorough and extensive were the arrangements and organization of the kingdom when Solomon was made king over Israel.

During the period of the Judges and the reign of Saul the Levitical order had become greatly disorganized. In the earlier part of David's reign efforts were made to restore them to their ancient work and standing, and at the time of the removal of the ark to Zion much was accomplished in reorganiz-

ing the Levites, and establishing a new and beautiful sanctuary service. But the more full and perfect arrangement of both priests and Levites was the work of David's last years. The statements of this chapter may be conveniently tabulated as follows:

Whole number of Levites from thirty years old and upward..... 88,000

These embraced four classes—

1. General Service..... 24,000
2. Officers and Judges..... 6,000
3. Porters..... 4,000
4. Musicians..... 4,000

GERSHON.	Laadan.....	Jehiel. Zetham. Joel. Shelomith. Haziël. Haran.
		Jahath. Zina, (or Zirah.) Jeush. Beriah.
KOHATH.	Amram.....	Shebuel. Rehabiah.
	Ishar.....	Shelomith.
	Hebron.....	Jeriah. Amariah. Jahaziel. Jekameam.
	Uzziel.....	Micah. Jesiah.
MERARI.	Mahli.....	Eleazar. Kish.
	Mushi.....	Mahli. Eder. Jeremoth.

**4. To set forward the work of the house**—Rather, *to preside over the work*; to attend to the various kinds of service specified in verses 28-32. **Officers and judges**—Hebrew, *Shote-rim and Shophetim*. They served as local magistrates and judges throughout the various cities of the land. See notes on Josh. i, 10, and comp. chap. xxvi, 29, and 2 Chron. xix, 8-10.

**13. Aaron was separated**—The divisions and courses of his sons, the priests, are given in the next chapter, and so not numbered with the ordinary Levites.

**14. Moses...his sons were named of the tribe of Levi**—Unlike his priestly brother Aaron, his sons were numbered with the ordinary Levites.

**24. Twenty years and upward—**

This is not to be explained by supposing an error in the text of verse 3, (Kiel,) nor by assuming that David first took a census of those thirty years of age and upward, and afterwards another census of those twenty years old and upwards. The writer introduces additional information, and explains in the verses following, that since Jehovah had given rest to his people, and the tabernacle was to be carried about no more, the Levites might begin to serve at an earlier age, and accordingly David ordained among his last instructions, (verse 27,) that the Levites might be numbered for service at the age of twenty—a practice which afterwards prevailed. 2 Chron. xxxi, 17; Ezra iii, 8.

**31. To offer all burnt sacrifices—**

That is, to assist the priests in offering, for the ordinary Levite did not offer up the offering with his own hands, but he prepared the altar and the wood, and selected and brought the victims, and helped to slay and skin them. Comp. Num. iii, 5-10; xviii, 1-7.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

In this chapter we have a record of the divisions of the sons of Aaron. Among the descendants of Eleazar and Ithamar there were found twenty-four heads of father's houses, sixteen descended from Eleazar and eight from Ithamar. These were accordingly distributed by lot into twenty-four courses, to serve by turn in the holy service. Each course seems to have served a week at a time, the term commencing and ending on the Sabbath. Compare 2 Kings xi, 5-7; 2 Chron. xxiii, 8. Probably the outgoing course officiated at the morning service, and their successors commenced their week's work with the evening service of the Sabbath day.

**20. The rest of the sons of Levi—**

That is, those besides the priests just enumerated. These were connected more especially with the service in the temple, and were immediate assistants to the priests. A comparison of this list with that in chap. xxiii, 7-23, will show a number of differences. Of the

Gershonites none are here named, and among the Kohathites and Merarites several names appear which are not found in chap. xxiii. The difference between the two lists seems to lie chiefly in this, that the former tabulates all the chief Levitical fathers, the latter only such as had some special relation to the priests in the temple service. The latter list has also some additional names, probably of "younger brethren," (verse 31.) of the Levitical houses, selected by lot to represent, like the priests, twenty-four courses. They may be tabulated as follows:

Kohathites.	Jehdeiah.	Merarites.	Mahli.
	Ishiah.		Mushi.
	Shelomoth.		Jaaziah.
	Jahath.		Shoham.
	Jeraiah.		Zaccur.
	Amariah.		Ibri.
	Jahaziel.		Eleazar.
	Jekameam.		Kish.
	Michah.		Jerahmeel.
	Shamir.		Mahli.
	Ishiah.		Eder.
	Zechariah.		Jerimoth.

**26. The sons of Jaaziah—**This Jaaziah is not to be regarded as a third son of Merari, of the same generation with Mahli and Mushi, but probably a younger descendant, selected by lot to complete the list of twenty-four principal assistants of the priests. The word **Beno** in this verse and the next is not a proper name, but simply the Hebrew for *his son*, and should have been so translated.

**31. The principal fathers over against their younger brethren—**These courses were decided by lot, so that in the present classification the older houses had no advantage over the younger. Hence the differences between this list and that of chapter xxiii.

## CHAPTER XXV.

In this chapter we have the names and classification of the musicians. These, like the priests and their assistants, were divided by lot into twenty-four courses.

**1. Captains of the host—**Not military captains, but *princes*, chief men of Israel, who formed David's cabinet for counsel and assisted in all these arrangements of the priests and Levites.

**Prophecy with harps**—This prophesying was the public recitation of psalms to the praise of God, a service which had long been cultivated in the schools of the prophets. See note on 1 Sam. x, 5

**2. Prophesied according to the order of the king**—That is, in accordance with David's arrangements and orders.

**3. Six**—Only five names are here given, but a comparison of names in vers. 9-31 shows that *Shimei* (ver. 17) has been dropped out of the text of this verse.

**5. Heman the king's seer in the words of God**—Besides his musical talent, Heman had also the gift of revelation, to make known to the king the things of God. Asaph and Jeduthun were also seers. 2 Chron. xxix, 30; xxxv, 15. **To lift up the horn**—The expression is obscure as it stands in the present text. Some understand it of the use of the horn in the musical service, but as the horn is not named among the instruments used by these Levites, some of the best expositors connect the phrase with what follows, and explain it in the metaphorical sense of increasing one's power. For this sense of the words comp. 1 Sam. ii, 10; Psal. cxlviii, 14; Lam. ii, 17. So, to increase Heman's power and honour God "gave" him "fourteen sons and three daughters."

**6. Under the hands of their father**—Under the direction and leadership of their father.

**7. All that were cunning**—All that were skilled or disciplined in the service of song.

**8. They cast lots, ward against ward**—The word rendered *ward* means a *charge*, a guardianship or superintendence. They cast lots to determine the order in which these different classes of singers should serve in the holy service, one class *having charge* until succeeded in the regular order by another. Our translators have repeated the word *ward*, but the Hebrew text reads literally: *They cast lots for the charge, in the same manner as the small so the great, the skilled with the scholar*. Of the four thousand Levites

appointed for the service of song, (chap. xxiii, 5,) the two hundred and eighty eight represented in verses 9-31 were the *skilled ones*, ("all that were cunning," verse 7.) And these were so arranged and distributed by lot that the rest of the four thousand (3,712) were amply supplied with teachers, there being one teacher for about thirteen scholars. So both the small and great, (that is, the older and the younger, comp. chap. xxiv, 31,) the teachers and the scholars, were divided into classes, and distributed by lot.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

We have in this chapter an account, 1) of the divisions of the porters, see verses 1-10; 2) of those who had charge of the treasures of the temple, verses 20-28; 3) of the officers and judges, verses 29-32. We note with interest that Obed-edom, whose house had been blessed by the presence of the ark, (chap. xiii, 14,) and who had been a doorkeeper of the ark (chap. xv, 24) from the time of its removal to Jerusalem, holds a prominent and honoured place among the porters.

A number of terms used in connexion with the location of the porters are obscure; namely, "the house of Asupim," verse 15; "the gate Shallecheth, by the causeway of the going up," verse 16; and "Parbar," verse 18. As these arrangements were made by David, the words in question have, doubtless, reference to the gates or approaches to the tabernacle which David pitched on Zion, and not to the Solomonian temple. Hence they have nothing to do with the topography of Moriah, though doubtless these several divisions of porters retained the same relative positions in the temple of Solomon. *Asupim* means *collections*, and "the house of Asupim" is very naturally supposed to have been a building near the southern gate used for storing certain goods of the sanctuary. Comp. Neh. xii, 25, note. "The causeway of the going up" is supposed by many to be the ascent from the palace to the temple, (1 Kings x, 5, note,) but as the temple was not yet built, this view can hardly be accepted. It is more likely

to refer to some ascent or causeway on the eastern side of Zion. "Parbar" is thought by many to be the same as the *parvarim*, translated *suburbs*, in 2 Kings xxiii, 11; but the word is of uncertain meaning, and speculation on its import seems thus far to have been fruitless.

28. **All that Samuel . . . Saul . . . Abner . . . and Joab . . . had dedicated**—Here it appears that the sacred treasury had been receiving contributions from the chief men of Israel as far back as the time of Samuel. Comp also Joshua vi, 24.

29. **For the outward business over Israel**—The business of local scribes, magistrates, and teachers of the people. See note on chap. xxiii, 4. As such their office was, as expressed in verse 32, to attend to "every matter pertaining to God and the affairs of the king." They were to proclaim, expound, and enforce among the people the law of God and the commands of the king.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE TWELVE MILITARY CAPTAINS, 1-15.

"The military force was distributed into twelve legions of 24,000 men each = 288,000 men fit for service; each of these legions was on duty for a month at a time, and during the rest of the year they might attend to their own private occupations. Each had a captain, one of David's worthies. Comp. chap. xi, 11, and 2 Sam. xxiii, 8.

We recognise the same numerical basis in the military service of David's kingdom as in the ecclesiastical. The number twelve is the basis of both. The analogy between the two is suggested by the Hebrew word *tsaba*, (צבא) *host*, which is applied to both. The temple of God was like a camp, in which the soldiers of the Lord watched, and defended the king and the people by the arms of prayer. And the camp of David was like a sanctuary, in which the king's armies did service to God, and from which they went forth to fight the Lord's battles."—*Wordsworth*.

2. **Jashobeam**—The names of all these captains are found in the lists of David's mighty men. Chap. xi, 11-47, 2 Sam. xxiii, 8-39. Some few names are spelled differently in the different lists.

5. **A chief priest**—Rather, as margin, a *principal officer*; the private counsellor of the king. Comp. 1 Kings iv, 5, note, and 2 Sam. xxiii, 23.

7. **Asahel . . . Zebadiah**—Though the son was captain of the fourth division, his swift-footed and heroic father was ever honourably named upon the roll.

### THE PRINCES OF THE TRIBES, 16-22.

These princes or rulers were probably the oldest representatives of their several tribes; "the eldest lineal descendants of the patriarchs according to the law of primogeniture."—*Rawlinson*. For some reason now unknown the tribes of Gad and Asher are not here mentioned.

23, 24. These two verses seem to have been inserted in this connexion with a reference especially to the military divisions mentioned in verses 1-15. "The numbering of the Israelites from twenty years and upwards," says Bertheau, "was undertaken, as we may infer from the reference to it in this passage, in order that its results might be made available for dividing the army into twelve sections, and for the other arrangements described in this chapter."

It appears from chapter xxi, 1 and 2 Sam. xxiv, 1, that David sinned in attempting to number Israel at all. But while he refused to be counselled in that matter, and his "word prevailed against Joab," he ventured not to number any Israelites under twenty years, lest he should seem to distrust God's promise to Abraham. Gen. xv, 5; xxii, 17.

24. **Began to number, but he finished not**—Here we find that the census was interrupted by the pestilence. Comp. note on chap. xxi, 6. **Neither was the number put in the account of the Chronicles of king David**—"We can easily understand that the disastrous circumstances which

followed on the taking of the census produced a feeling that God might be further provoked by its being put on record in the state archives. It was consequently omitted; and the accounts of the numbers which have come down to us must have been derived from some comparatively private sources."

—*Rawlinson.*

#### OFFICERS OF THE KING'S REVENUE, 25-31.

This section is interesting as showing the various kinds and sources of David's royal revenue. Precious metals, grains, fruits, wine, oil, flocks, and herds, furnished each their measure "of the substance which was King David's." A stone tablet containing the amount of information here given of any heathen king of David's time would be gladly bought by the payment of thousands of dollars; and many a sceptic, who treats the Bible with comparative scorn, would be ready to extol the heathen tablet to the skies.

#### DAVID'S COUNSELLORS, 32-34.

"This catalogue of the king's officials forms a supplement to the catalogues of the public officials given in chap. xviii, 15-17; 2 Sam. viii, 15-18; xx, 23-26. It is not the chief public officials who are enumerated, but only the first counsellors of the king, who formed, as it were, his senate, and the catalogue was probably derived from the same source as the preceding catalogues."—*Keil.*

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

#### DAVID'S LAST NATIONAL COUNCIL.

Having thoroughly organized the ecclesiastical, political, and military departments of the government, David assembled at Jerusalem all the chief representatives of the nation, and in their presence handed over the kingdom to Solomon, with solemn instructions to build the temple, and with sketches, plans, and materials for its construction. These proceedings were subsequent to the hasty anointing and inauguration of Solomon described in 1 Kings i. Comp. chap. xxix, 22. After rehearsing in substance the matter of

his purpose to build the temple, and God's communications to him on the subject, (verses 2-7; comp. chap. xxii, 6-10; xvii, 1-15, and 2 Sam. vii, 1-17, notes,) David exhorts the congregation and Solomon in particular, to a devout obedience, (8-10,) and then narrates his plans and preparations for the temple and its service. Verses 11-24.

11. **The pattern**—Jehovah had somehow revealed to David the pattern of the temple, as he revealed to Moses that of the tabernacle. Exod. xxvi, 30. **The porch**—See on 1 Kings vi, 3. **The houses thereof**—The two main rooms, the holy place and the holy of holies, called in 1 Kings vi, 17, 27, respectively "the house" and "the inner house." **The treasuries**—These were probably located in some of the side chambers. **The upper chambers**—These are mentioned again in 2 Chron. iii, 9, and are probably to be understood of the upper tier or story of the side chambers, mentioned in 1 Kings vi, 5. Bertheau thinks they were over the most holy place, which, being twenty cubits every way, left a vacant space above of twenty cubits square and ten cubits high. But the place above the oracle would have been most likely left in darkness, and the plan of the temple as given in 1 Kings vi, shows no way of access to it. **The inner parlours thereof**—These were probably the more private apartments of the middle and lower stories of the side chambers. **The place of the mercy seat**—Hebrew, *house of the cap-poreth*; that is, the oracle, or holy of holies. See on 1 Kings vi, 20.

12. **The pattern of all that he had by the Spirit**—Rather, *of all that was in spirit with him*; that is, of all that was pictured or conceived in his own mind. The words do not warrant the explanation, all that was shown him by the Holy Spirit.

15, 16. **The candlesticks of silver and the tables of silver** are mentioned nowhere else. They were probably for the more private use of the priests and Levites.

18. **The chariot of the cherubim**—The words *chariot* and *cherubim* are grammatically in apposition—the char-

O. T.

iot, namely, the cherubim. The cherubim were themselves regarded as the chariot on which Jehovah rode. Psa. xviii, 10.

19. **The Lord made me understand in writing by his hand upon me**—Literally, *the whole in a writing from the hand of Jehovah upon me he taught, all the works of the pattern.* The meaning of this passage seems to be, that David had committed his plans for the temple to writing, and having modelled them largely after the pattern of the tabernacle, and conscious of the Divine inspiration and approval with which he wrote, he presented his patterns to Solomon as no devices or plans of his own invention, but as truly God-given as that received by Moses in the mount. Exod. xxv, 40. It need not be assumed, however, that David received the revelation of his plans in the same way that Moses did those of the tabernacle.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

In this chapter David continues his address to the assembly, and exhorts his princes and chief men, in view of what he had done, to contribute to the house of God. Vers. 1-5. To this they liberally respond, 6-9; whereupon David offers thanksgiving and prayer unto God, (10-19,) and the assembly closes with a sacrificial feast. Verses 20-22. With a few words on the enthroning of Solomon, (23-25,) and the acts and death of David, (26-30,) the writer concludes his history of David's reign.

1. **The palace is not for man**—The word here rendered *palace* (*birah*) is used in Neh. i, 1, and Esth. i, 2, of the royal residence of the Persian kings; and in Neh. ii, 8, (where see note,) of a fortress or citadel erected near the temple of Zerubbabel. It is here used of the temple as of the royal residence of Israel's Divine King.

4. **Ophir**—See the note on 1 Kings ix, 28. Here it appears that "the gold of Ophir" was brought (probably by Arabian merchants) to Israel in the days of David.

5. **To consecrate his service**—Rather, as the margin, *to fill his hand to-day for Jehovah*; that is, to draw

near with his hands full of gifts to Jehovah.

15. **None abiding**—Hebrew, *no hope*; that is, no confidence or certain assurance of continuing long on earth.

18. **Keep this for ever in... the heart of thy people**—That is, preserve—continue—in them this liberal spirit of giving.

22. **They made Solomon... king the second time**—His first enthronement was hurried because of Adonijah's attempt to usurp the kingdom. See the account in 1 Kings i, 5-49. **And Zadok to be priest**—Abiathar had been found in conspiracy with Adonijah, (1 Kings i, 7,) and was afterward deposed by Solomon. 1 Kings ii, 26. Thereupon Zadok became sole high priest, (1 Kings ii, 35,) and it was proper for this great assembly publicly to appoint him to his high office. This assembly was held before Solomon deposed and banished Abiathar, so that we should regard Solomon's action in the case, as narrated in 1 Kings ii, 26-27, as the carrying out of the will of the assembly.

29. **The acts of David**—Literally, *the words of David*. This means not his sayings merely, but the events and experiences of his life. Many of his words and deeds were doubtless written by himself, and his own writings were used by other writers as sources of information. **The book of Samuel... the book of Nathan... the book of Gad**—The word rendered *book* in each case here is like that ren-

dered *acts* above, דְּבָרֵי, *words*, history; that is, both words and deeds. Comp. note on Neh. i, 1. The works in question are among the lost literature of the ancient Hebrews, and their exact character is now unknown. It is not certain that they were written by the persons named, but they were probably narratives of their lives and times, and may have been written either by themselves or by others. **The seer... the prophet... the seer**—In the Hebrew these are three different words, the *roeh*, the *nabi*, and the *chozeh*. Or *roeh* and *nabi* see note on 1 Sam. ix, 9, where it is shown that

*roeh* is the more ancient and popular name for a prophet, (*nabi*), or one gifted with unusual foresight and wisdom.

'*Roeh* is a title almost appropriated to Samuel. It is only used ten times, and in seven of these it is applied to Samuel. 1 Sam. ix, 9, 11, 18, 19; 1 Chron. ix, 22; xxvi, 28; xxix, 29. On two other occasions it is applied to Hanani. 2 Chron. xvi, 7, 10. Once it is used by Isaiah, (Isa. xxx, 10,) with no reference to any particular person." — SMITH'S *Bib. Dic.* *Chozeh* has been thought by some to have been the title of the prophet or seer that was officially attached to the king's household. Comp. chap. xxi, 9; xxv, 5. But the words *roeh* and *chozeh* have substantially the same meaning, and in fact the three, *nabi*, *roeh*, and *chozeh*, seem to have been often used interchangeably.

"It has been alleged by some," says Wordsworth, "that David's old age and death were overhung with clouds. But if the facts are carefully collected and duly considered, it will be seen and acknowledged that, though some mists and shadows of human weakness obscured the evening of David's life, yet, by an extraordinary effort, the inner spiritual light struggled through the veil of mortal sadness and infirmity, and by the help of divine grace it beamed out in gleams of glory; and the sun broke forth with supernatural brilliance and extraordinary lustre just before it went down; and if there was ever a glorious sunset in this world, it was that of David, 'the man after God's own heart,' the type of 'the Sun of Righteousness,' who is 'the Light of the world.'"



DAVID'S CASTLE AND YAFFA GATE.

## SECOND BOOK OF CHRONICLES.

## SECTION THIRD.

## HISTORY OF SOLOMON'S REIGN.

## CHAPTERS I-IX.

## CHAPTER I.

## SOLOMON'S SACRIFICE AND WISE CHOICE AT GIBEON, 1-12.

Our historian introduces his history of Solomon with an account of his sacrifice at Gibeon and his wise choice, verses 1-12. A comparison of this narrative with that of 1 Kings iii, 4-15 will show a general agreement; but the chronicler is somewhat fuller in details. Here we are told that a great congregation, composed of all the officers and chief fathers of Israel, assembled with Solomon at Gibeon, and that the tabernacle, and the brazen altar made by Bezaleel, (comp. Exod. xxxi, 2-5; xxxviii, 1-7,) were there, while the ark was at Jerusalem.

## SOLOMON'S RICHES, 13-17.

Comp. 1 Kings x, 26-29 notes. The chronicler shows less care than the writer of Kings to detail the riches and power of Solomon. He has comparatively little to say of his secular and political life, and having noted these few things as to his wealth in chariots and horses, and gold and silver, he passes on to describe the building of the temple.

## CHAPTER II.

## PREPARATIONS FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

The account given in this chapter of Solomon's negotiations with Hiram, and other arrangements preparatory to building the temple, is parallel with that of 1 Kings v, where see notes. The two narratives agree in all essential respects, but their differences are

of such a nature as to show that these letters of Solomon and Hiram are not accurate and literal transcripts, but simply a free paraphrase or statement of the outline and substance of the original letters. In neither place, probably, have we all the contents of these royal letters, but one writer supplements the other.

1. **A house for his kingdom**—That is, a royal palace.

3. **Huram**—The original and more correct form of the name was Hiram. Comp. 2 Sam. v, 11.

7. **Send me . . . a man cunning to work in gold**—A skilled artificer; a master workman. Here we have the specific request for such a workman, which is implied, but not explicitly stated, in Kings.

13. **Of Hiram my father's**—The *of* (שׁ) in the Hebrew being here merely the sign of the accusative) should be omitted, and the word rendered *my father* taken as a part of Hiram's name. Thus: *I have sent a cunning man . . . Hiram-Abi*. If, however, it be preferred to translate the word, *Abi, my father*, it is to be taken in the sense of my master; that is, my master-workman. Comp. chap. iv, 16, and Gen. xlv, 8. See note on 1 Kings vii, 13, 14.

## CHAPTERS III-VI.

These chapters narrate the building and the dedication of the temple, and correspond with 1 Kings vi-viii. The two accounts differ somewhat in arrangement, and the chronicler furnishes no description of the palace. See the notes on the parallel passages in Kings, where the differences between the two accounts are sufficiently noted.

The word *Parvaim*, in chap. iii, 6, occurs nowhere else. It seems clearly to denote the place whence the gold for ornamenting the temple was de-

rived; a well known gold region, like Ophir. 1 Kings x, 11. Some think it another form of the name *Ophir*; others of *Sepharvaim*. 2 Kings xvii, 31. Some think it may be equivalent to the Sanscrit *purva*, which means *eastern*. But all explanations of the word, and all attempts to identify Parvaim with any known locality, are purely conjectural.

### CHAPTER VII.

This chapter agrees, in the main, with 1 Kings viii, 62; ix, 9. The chronicler, however, has more of detail, and informs us that "the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the house." Thus Jehovah set his Divine approval upon the dedication of the temple, as he had anciently upon that of the tabernacle. Comp. Exod. xl, 34; Lev. ix, 24.

### CHAPTERS VIII, IX.

The contents of these chapters, which conclude our author's history of Solomon, are substantially identical with 1 Kings ix, 10-x, 28, and xi, 41-43. The passage in chapter ix, 12, "besides that which she had brought unto the king," which has been so often held up as a blunder of the chronicler, is probably to be explained as a defective text, a few words having in some way fallen out. As compared with 1 Kings x, 13, the sense is equivalent to, besides that which *he gave her in return for what she had brought unto the king*. He did not return to her the gifts which she brought him, but responded to her gifts by presents worthy of his royal state.

The chronicler omits all mention of Solomon's sins and fall, and of the adversaries that disturbed his peace; but he informs us that Solomon fortified, and peopled with Israelites, the cities which Hiram restored; that he warred successfully against Hamath-zobah, (on which see Josh. xiii, 5; 1 Sam. xiv, 47; 2 Sam. viii, 3, notes;) and that he rebuilt Beth-horon the Upper.

The author of Kings refers to "the book of the acts of Solomon" as the source of his information, (1 Kings xi, 41,) while the chronicler cites "the

book of Nathan the prophet," "the prophecy of Abijah the Shilonite," and "the visions of Iddo the seer against Jeroboam the son of Nebat." Chap. ix, 29. These works, like the authorities for David's reign, (1 Chron. xxix, 29, note,) are now lost, and their exact extent and character are unknown.

### SECTION FOURTH.

### HISTORY OF THE KINGDOM OF JUDAH.

#### CHAPTERS X-XXXVI.

The chronicler narrates the history of the kingdom of Judah more fully than we find it in the books of Kings, but he attempts no detailed account of the northern and rival kingdom of Israel. See Introduction.

The permanency of the kingdom of Judah, and the royal line of David, is one of the marvels of history. While other kingdoms fell it remained. Revolutions swept over Egypt, and dynasty after dynasty passed away; Phenicia and Syria, with their various kingdoms, flourished and decayed; the great Assyrian empire, after oppressing both Israel and Judah, and utterly destroying the former, was overthrown; and yet the kingdom of Judah, with a descendant of David on the throne, maintained its individuality, held its ancient and sacred capital, and continued unbroken, resolute, hopeful. And even after its fall under Nebuchadnezzar, and the seventy years of foreign exile, when Babylon in turn had fallen, and the Persian empire had risen into power, we find the scattered exiles coming back again to their fatherland, rebuilding their temple and capital, guided and governed still by a scion of the house of David.

### CHAPTER X.

This chapter is nearly identical with 1 Kings xii, 1-19, where see notes.

### CHAPTER XI.

The first four verses of this chapter are nearly identical with 1 Kings xii, 21-24, where see notes.

## REHOBOAM'S FORTIFIED CITIES, 5-12.

"Precluded by the Divine command from assailing his adversary, Rehoboam was obliged to stand on the defensive. He felt himself between two dangers: on the north he might be attacked by Jeroboam; on the south by Jeroboam's ally, Egypt. From this side was the greatest peril, and to this quarter therefore was his main attention directed. Out of the fifteen cities fortified, all but three were on the southern or western frontier, where Egypt would be most likely to attack."

—*Rawlinson.*

6. **Beth-lehem**—The city of David and of Christ. See on Ruth i, 1; Matt. ii, 1. **Etam**—Identified by Dr. Robinson with the ruined village Urtas, about a mile south of Beth-lehem. Here he found "traces of an ancient site—the foundations of a square tower, a low thick wall of large squared stones, rocks hewn and scarped, and the like." Tobler, however, identifies Etam with Ain Attan, a little southwest of Urtas. Comp. note on Judges xv, 8. **Tekoa**—Twelve miles south of Jerusalem. See on 2 Sam. xiv, 2. All three of these places are mentioned in the Septuagint version of Josh. xv, 59, but are wanting in the Hebrew text.

7. **Beth-zur**...**Soco**...**Adullam**—See Josh. xv, 35, 58.

8. **Gath**—See note on 1 Sam. v, 8, **Mareshah**...**Ziph**—Josh. xv, 44, 55.

9. **Adoraim**—Not mentioned elsewhere in Scripture, but several times in Josephus, and once in the Apocrypha. 1 Macc. xiii, 20. Robinson considered its site identical with the modern Dura, some five miles southwest of Hebron. **Lachish**—See on Josh. x, 3. **Azekah**—Josh. xv, 35. Its site is unknown.

10. **Zorah**—See on Josh. xv, 33. **Aijalon**—See on 1 Sam. xiv, 31. **Hebron**—Josh. x, 3. **In Judah and in Benjamin**—That is, these cities were in the territory now ruled by the kingdom of Judah and Benjamin. None of them were in the tribe-territory of Benjamin, but Benjamin is here mentioned as being identified with the kingdom of Rehoboam. Comp. verses 1, 12, and 23.

## THE LEVITES RESORT TO JERUSALEM, 13-17.

Having mentioned how Rehoboam strengthened the natural defenses of his kingdom, the writer proceeds to show how he received additional strength, of a moral character, by the general coming to him of the priests and Levites, and pious Israelites from all the tribes. Jeroboam's institution of the calf worship at Beth-el and Dan naturally drove the regular priests and Levites from the northern kingdom. See note on 1 Kings xii, 31.

14. **For Jeroboam...cast them off**—The priests and Levites probably opposed Jeroboam's innovations, and for that reason suffered persecution, and many of them may have been obliged to leave their suburbs and possessions.

15. **Ordained him priests**—See on 1 Kings xii, 31. **For the devils**—

לַשְׁעִירִים, *for the goats*. The word is translated *satyrs* in Isa. xiii, 21; xxxiv, 14, and is supposed to have been a goat-shaped deity, a wood-demon, that dwelt in desert places, and was to be appeased by Divine worship. "This superstition," says Fürst, "was probably derived from Egypt, where a goat, (*Josephus*, Apion, ii, 7,) or Pan, who was depicted with a goat's head and feet, (*Herod.*, ii, 46, 145,) was worshipped." The word is used in Lev. iv, 24; xvi, 9; Num. vii, 16; xv, 24, for the *he goat* that was sacrificed as a sin offering; but Jeroboam probably meant to recognize and introduce the superstitions of Egypt, and set up images of Pan as well as **the calves**, though probably not until after his people had become familiar with the calf worship. Comp. note on 1 Kings xii, 28.

16. **After them...such as set their hearts to seek the Lord**—The more pious Israelites, like the seven thousand that would not worship Baal, (1 Kings xix, 18,) were disgusted with Jeroboam's innovations, and followed their priests and Levites to Jerusalem.

17. **Three years**—That is, the kingdom of Judah was strengthened physically and morally by military defenses, and by the resort of the Levites and

the purer Israelites to Jerusalem, and continued thus strong for three years. Then began that forsaking of the law (chap. xii, 1) which was punished by Shishak's invasion.

### REHOBAM'S FAMILY, 18-23.

**18. Jerimoth the son of David—**Since Jerimoth is nowhere else mentioned among the sons of David, he is generally supposed to have been a son of one of David's concubines.

**21. Eighteen wives, and three-score concubines—**See note on 1 Kings xi, 3. Rehoboam imitated, but did not go to the extent of, his father's polygamy. In the number of sons and daughters, however, he far excelled his father.

**22. Made Abijah...chief...to make him king—**So he, like his grandfather David, did not select and nominate his oldest son and legal heir (comp. Deut. xxi, 15-17) for the throne, but the son of his favourite wife.

**23. He dealt wisely—**That is, with his other sons, so as to avert the dangers that might have otherwise accrued. Had he not been shrewd and careful so to scatter his children, and give them princely livings in separate cities, they might have had abundant opportunity to become jealous of Abijah, and to plot rebellion. **Gave them victuals in abundance—**So that they might live in princely state, and have no desire to attempt to gain the crown. **He desired many wives—**Rather, *he asked for a multitude of wives*; that is, wives for his sons, that he might thus further promote their pleasure and contentment. In all these measures Rehoboam showed himself a shrewd and skillful ruler.

### CHAPTER XII.

The narrative of this chapter is much fuller than its parallel in 1 Kings xiv, 21-31. It emphasizes the religious causes of Rehoboam's misfortunes, mentions the number and composition of Shishak's forces, the appearance and words of the prophet Shemaiah, the penitence of the king and the princes, and the compassion of Jehovah.

**3. The Lubim—***Libyans*, Dan. xi, 43;

probably identical with the Lehabim of Gen. x, 13. They were an African nation, apparently under Egyptian rule, and are repeatedly mentioned in connexion with the Egyptians and Ethiopians. Compare chap. xvi, 8; Nahum iii, 9. They peopled the African coast along the Mediterranean, west of Egypt. **The Sukkiim—**"This name does not occur elsewhere. The Seventy, who rendered the word by 'Troglydotes,' regarded the Sukkiim probably as the 'cave-dwellers' along the western shore of the Red Sea, who are mentioned by Strabo and others; but the conjecture of Gesenius, that the word means 'tent dwellers,' is plausible, and would point rather to a tribe of Arabs."—*Rawlinson*. **The Ethiopians** inhabited the country south of Egypt, which was watered by the Upper Nile. Compare 2 Kings xix, 9; Esther i, 1.

**5. Shemaiah the prophet—**See note on 1 Kings xii, 22. The powerful influence of this prophet over the king and the princes is here very noticeable. The time had not yet come when the kings of Judah dared treat Jehovah's prophets with contempt. Compare chapter xvi, 10; xxiv, 19; xxxiii, 10.

**15. Book of Shemaiah—**Probably an account of his life and prophecies written by himself. **Iddo the seer concerning genealogies—**Apparently a different work from that mentioned in chap. ix, 29. Comp. chap. xiii, 22, and Introduction.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### ABIJAH'S REIGN, 1-22.

Comp. 1 Kings xv, 1-8, notes. The chronicler adds greatly to our knowledge of Abijah's reign by giving an extended account of the war between him and Jeroboam.

**2. Michaiah—**Probably a copyist's error for *Maachah*. **Daughter of Uriel—**And granddaughter of Absalom. 1 Kings xv, 2, note.

**3. Set the battle in array—**Literally, *joined the battle*; that is, opened the war; began the fight. **Jeroboam also set the battle in array—**The verb here is different from that trans-

lated by the same words above. Abijah began the war in order to punish Jeroboam and Israel for rebellion, and Jeroboam ordered out his army for defense. The numbers 800,000 and 400,000 seem incredibly large; but perhaps the author only meant to designate the forces which each kingdom could command, not to say that all these 1,200,000 were engaged in any one battle. Compare the number of fighting men in David's time. 2 Sam. xxiv, 9.

**4. Stood up upon mount Zemaraim**—A general, standing upon an eminence, could, like Jotham on Mount Gerizim, speak so as to be heard by a vast audience below. See note on Judges ix, 7. The locality of Mount Zemaraim is uncertain. Some have thought to connect it with the Benjamite town of the same name mentioned in Josh. xviii, 22. But that was in the Jordan valley, this in **Mount Ephraim**. It was probably an eminence near the border of the two kingdoms, perhaps not far from Beth-el, near which the great battle was fought. **Hear me, thou Jeroboam**—Abijah vainly thinks to make his enemies see the sin and folly of their separating from the kingdom of David. His speech was one sided, for he failed to observe that the permanency and integrity of David's kingdom were conditioned upon obedience.

**5. A covenant of salt**—The meat-offering was a standing memorial of God's covenant with man, and could never be lawfully offered without salt. Lev. ii, 13. Salt, the symbol of perpetuity and incorruptibility, became therefore proverbially associated with the Israelitish notion of a sacred and inviolable covenant. Hence "a covenant of salt" is equivalent to "a holy and inviolable covenant." Compare Num. xviii, 19.

**12. O children of Israel, fight ye not against the Lord God of your fathers**—Abijah's speech, throughout, rings with the true theocratic spirit, but, as mentioned above, it fails to note all the facts involved in the division of the empire of David and Solomon. Its earnest and solemn appeals,

however, may have had much to do with the defeat of Israel, for God may have caused it to terrify multitudes of Jeroboam's warriors.

**17. There fell down slain of Israel five hundred thousand chosen men**

—These many *slain* (חללים, *pierced, wounded*) probably include both killed and wounded during the whole war; not those who fell in any one engagement.

**18. Israel were brought under**—Rather, *were humbled*. Jehovah saw fit to humble and defeat their pride, and he did so by means of Abijah and his army.

**19. Beth-el with the towns thereof**—It must have been a great humiliation to Jeroboam to lose this ancient city, the principal seat of his calf worship. It was subsequently recovered by the northern kingdom, but when and by whom is not recorded. The sites of **Jeshanah...and Ephraim** are now unknown.

**20. The Lord struck him, and he died**—We have elsewhere no intimation that Jeroboam died suddenly or by any special stroke of Divine judgment. He outlived Abijah some two years. But probably the stroke here referred to, and that which hastened Jeroboam's death, was the fearful prophecy of Ahijah, which foretold the utter extermination of Jeroboam's house. Comp. 1 Kings xiv, 7-16.

**22. The story of the prophet Iddo**—Rather, the *midrash*, or *commentary of the prophet Iddo*. A work apparently different from that "against Jeroboam," (chap. ix, 29,) and that "concerning genealogies," (chap. xiv, 15,) by the same prophet. The name would seem to show that it was a prophetic work consisting of comments and moral reflections on the ways and acts of the king. See Introduction.

## CHAPTER XIV.

The reign of Asa is written much more fully in this and the two following chapters than in the book of Kings. The parallel history in Kings, however, records some things not mentioned by the chronicler. Compare notes on 1 Kings xv, 9-24

1. **In his days the land was quiet ten years**—This was probably the result, largely, of Abijah's great victory over Jeroboam.

3. **Took away . . . the high places**—This statement, repeated in verse 5, seems to be contradicted in chap. xv, 17, where it is said "the high places were not taken away out of Israel." This apparent discrepancy is explicable in several ways. Some think that the *high places* here referred to were those of the *strange gods*; a possible explanation, though scarcely satisfactory, since no mention of strange gods occurs in verse 5, or chap. xv, 17. We may suppose that Asa succeeded, at one period of his reign, in abolishing all the high places, but that they subsequently appeared again, and he died without seeing his kingdom entirely rid of them. But perhaps the best explanation is, that Asa made the greatest effort to remove the high places from his kingdom, and was largely successful, but, notwithstanding all his efforts, he failed of complete success. The writer does not say that he took away *all* the high places. Either of these explanations is more rational than to suppose that the writer contradicted himself in the space of a chapter.

6. **Built fenced cities in Judah**—He probably restored the fortresses which Shishak had taken and dismantled. Compare chap. xii, 4. The kingdom of Judah had probably been tributary to Egypt since the time of Shishak's invasion, (chap. xii, 8, 9;) but now Asa discerned a favourable time to throw off this foreign yoke, and "while the land was yet before" them, (verse 7, that is, unoccupied and unguarded by the Egyptians, so that they could move about in it at pleasure,) he improved his opportunity to fortify his kingdom. Verse 8 shows also that the number of valiant warriors in Judah and Benjamin was now much greater than it was in Abijah's reign. Comp. chap. xiii, 3.

WAR WITH ZERAH THE ETHIOPIAN,  
9-15.

9. **Zerah the Ethiopian** belonged, probably, to the same dynasty as Shi-

shak, (see note on 1 Kings xi, 40; xiv, 25,) for the composition of his army of "the Ethiopians and the Lubiras," (chap. xvi, 8,) the same nations as composed the army of Shishak, (chap. xii, 3,) proves him to have been an Egyptian, not, as some have thought, an Asiatic or Arabian king. He was known as *the Ethiopian*, doubtless, because he was such by birth, being, as Rawlinson says, the son-in-law, not the son, of his predecessor on the throne of Egypt. Hence he is most probably to be identified with Usarken II., (written also *Osarchon*,) the third king of the twenty-second dynasty, and the second after Shishak. His object in invading Judah was doubtless to recover to Egypt the cities which Asa had been fortifying, (verse 6, note,) for Asa's procedure had been virtually a rebellion against Egypt. **A thousand thousand**—An enormous army, but not larger than other Oriental monarchs have been known to bring into the field. **Came unto Mareshah**—This was one of the cities which Rehoboam had fortified, (chap. xi, 8,) and which Shishak had probably captured. It lay, according to Robinson, (see note on Josh. xv, 44,) on a hill a mile and a half south of Eleutheropolis, a spot admirably adapted for a fortress. Here the hill country of Judah borders on the great Philistine plain, and the vast Egyptian army might easily have advanced along the coast, and across the plain as far as Mareshah, without meeting much opposition.

10. **The valley of Zephathah**—Dr. Robinson conjectures that this valley may have been the broad wady that runs northwesterly from Eleutheropolis towards Zell es-Safieh, which latter place may bear a trace of the ancient name *Zephathah*. But this valley seems to be too far away to be spoken of as **at Mareshah**. Probably some valley nearer the spot above indicated as Mareshah was the place of the battle.

11. **Asa cried unto the Lord**—The vast hosts of the enemy made Asa feel that his help and hope lay not in numbers. His prayer and his faith made a deep impression on the minds of his people. Chap. xvi, 8.

**12. The Lord smote the Ethiopians**—But not without the help of Asa and his Jewish and Benjamite forces. Jehovah inspired his people with faith and their enemies with terror, thus making the former doubly strong and the latter hopelessly weak and fearful. "Egyptian monuments," says R. Stuart Poole, "enable us to picture the general disposition of Zerah's army. The chariots formed the first corps, in a single or double line; behind them, massed in phalanxes, were heavy armed troops; probably on the flanks stood archers and horsemen in lighter formations. Asa, marching down a valley, must have attacked in a heavy column, for none but the most highly disciplined troops can form line from column in the face of an enemy. His spearmen of Judah would compose this column; each bank of the valley would be occupied by the Benjamite archers, like those who came to David, 'helpers of the war, armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow.' 1 Chron. xii, 1, 2. No doubt the Ethiopian, confident in his numbers, disdained to attack the Hebrews, or clear the heights, but waited in the broad valley or the plain. From the account of Abijah's defeat of Jeroboam, we may suppose that the priests sounded their trumpets, and the men of Judah descended with a shout. Chap. xiii, 14, 15. The hills and mountains were the favourite camping places of the Hebrews, who usually rushed down upon their more numerous or better disciplined enemies in the plains and valleys."—SMITH'S *Bible Dictionary*.

**13. Pursued them unto Gerar**—A distance of twenty miles or more, on the way from Mareshah to Egypt. Gerar was an ancient Philistine town, the abode for a time of Abraham and of Isaac. Gen. xx, 1; xxvi, 1. It is probable that Mr. Williams discovered the site of this ancient city in the ruins *el Gerar*, some three hours south of Gaza, situated in a wady of the same name; but this identification has not yet been confirmed by more recent exploration. It was a nomadic region, and, lying on the borders of the desert,

it would be likely to abound in cattle, sheep, and camels. Verse 15.

**14. They smote all the cities round about Gerar**—For probably the inhabitants of these cities were in league with Zerah, and had assisted in this war against Judah. With the **much spoil** of these cities, Asa was enabled to repair the serious losses his kingdom had sustained by the invasion of Shishak. Chap. xii, 9.

"The defeat of the Egyptian army by Asa," says Poole, "is without a parallel in the history of the Jews. On no other occasion did an Israelite army meet an army of one of the great powers and defeat it. Shishak was unopposed; Sennacherib was not met in the field; Necho was so met, but overthrew Josiah's army; Nebuchadnezzar, like Shishak, was only delayed by fortifications. The defeat of Zerah thus is a solitary instance, more of the power of faith than of the bravery of the Hebrews—a single witness that the God of Israel was still the same who had led his people through the Red Sea, and would give them the same aid if they trusted in him."

## CHAPTER XV.

### AZARIAH'S PROPHECY, 1-7.

**1. Azariah the son of Oded** is mentioned only here. He was probably a member of one of the prophetic schools, and was full of enthusiasm and zeal for Jehovah. He appears, like others of his order, to counsel and admonish kings and princes by the word of the Lord.

**2. Went out to meet Asa**—The occasion was one peculiarly appropriate for the prophecy Azariah was about to utter. Returning from a victory which had most manifestly been gained by the help of Jehovah, it was well for him to be solemnly admonished of his responsibilities, and advised (though it might be for the hundredth time) that Jehovah's mercies were conditioned upon obedience to His law.

**3. Now for a long season**—Literally, *and many days to Israel to be without a God of truth*, etc. The period here referred to by the *long season*, or *many*

*days*, has been variously understood. Some refer it to the kingdom of the ten tribes at that time; others to the past history of the nation, especially the age of the Judges; and others make it a prophecy of the future. No doubt the passage states facts which were true of various periods in the history of Israel, and conveys moral lessons applicable to all times; but it seems more natural for the prophet to speak in this connexion of things which had actually taken place, so as to base his counsels on matters of fact, and the allusions in verses 4, 5, and 6 are most obviously to the state of things often experienced in the times of the Judges. With this more special reference in mind, but at the same time remembering the wider application of the statement, we may convey the true sense of the passage thus: *Many a time has Israel been without the true God, etc. Without a teaching priest*—Israel always had priests enough, such as they were; but many a time were they destitute of wise and pious priests who were competent to instruct the people in the true knowledge of Jehovah. *Without law*—That is, when the law was ill understood and worse observed, and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judges xvii, 6; xxi, 25.

**4. When they in their trouble did turn... he was found**—This was often verified in the days of the Judges. Compare Judg. iii, 9, 15; iv, 3-7, etc.

**5. No peace... but great vexations**—As when the highways were untravelled, (Judges v, 6,) and the people sought asylum in the mountains and caves. Judges vi, 2. **The countries**—The various districts of the land of Israel.

**6. Nation... destroyed of nation**—"It is quite in harmony with the rhetorical nature of the passage that the contentions of the Israelites among themselves (for example, in the time of the Judges between the inhabitants of Gilead and Ephraim, and between Benjamin and the rest of the tribes, Judges xii, 4; xx, xxi; and in later times between the two Israelitish kingdoms) should be described as a crush-

ing of one people by the other."—*Ben theau*. **City of city**—Comp. Judges ix, 45.

**7. Be ye strong therefore**—This was the direct application of Azariah's prophecy—counsel and exhortation for the king and people to be firm in obedience to Jehovah and in maintaining the honour of his name and law.

#### ASA'S REFORMS AND RENEWAL OF THE COVENANT, 8-19.

**8. And the prophecy of Oded the prophet**—Here is doubtless a corruption in the text. Either the words of *Oded* should be omitted, as an interpolation, or else the words *Azariah the son* (see verse 1) should be supplied. **Took courage**—Azariah's oracle inspired the king with a zeal and enthusiasm even additional to that occasioned by the recent marvellous victory. **Put away the abominable idols**—This effort to clear his realm of idolatry is probably not to be identified with his earlier work of reform described in chap. xiv, 3, but a later effort, inspired and encouraged by his victory over Zerah and by the words of the prophet. It may have been that his earlier efforts were only partially successful, and that Azariah's oracle reminded him that much remained to be done in the work of reform. **The cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim**—The cities which his father had taken from Jeroboam. Chap. xiii, 19. The writer, in his hasty brevity of narration, attributed to Asa what was really the work of his father. See a similar inaccuracy in chapter xvii, 2. **Renewed the altar**—The great brazen altar described in chap. iv, 1, which stood in the priests' court **before the porch** of the temple. Some sixty years had passed since the temple was built, and this altar may, for that reason, have needed repair; or it may have been polluted by idolatry, and therefore needed renewal.

**9. The strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh**—The Israelites of these leading tribes of the northern kingdom are here spoken of as *strangers*. Such estrangement had

secession wrought. Many of the more pious Israelites out of the various tribes joined the kingdom of Judah in the days of Rehoboam, but multitudes more came now **when they saw that the Lord his God was with Asa.** **And out of Simeon**—Most of the tribe of Simeon probably fell to the southern kingdom from the first, but not all the tribe, for there were not a few whose jealousy of Judah and Jerusalem led them to cast in their fortunes with the majority of the nation. Keil remarks that "the Simeonites, though politically united with Judah, yet in religious matters were not so, but had set up in Beersheba a worship of their own similar to that in Beth-el and Dan. In such a case the more earnest and thoughtful people from Simeon, as well as from Ephraim and Manasseh, may have gone to Jerusalem to the sacrificial festival prepared by Asa. In favour of this last supposition we may adduce the fact that the prophet Amos (chap. iv, 4; v, 5; viii, 14) mentions Beer-sheba, along with Beth-el and Gilgal, as a place to which pilgrimages were made by the idolatrous Israelites."

12. **They entered into a covenant**—Compare a like event in the time of Josiah, chap. xxxiv, 31; 2 Kings xxiii, 3; and in the time of Nehemiah, Neh. x, 28, 29.

13. **Whosoever would not seek the Lord... should be put to death**—The stern requirement of the ancient law. See at Exod. xxii, 20; Deut. xiii, 6-17; xvii, 2-7.

16-18. These verses are identical with 1 Kings xv, 13-15, where see notes.

17. **The high places were not taken away**—See note on chapter xiv, 3.

19. **No more war unto the five and thirtieth year of... Asa**—This date, and also that of the next verse, (chap. xvi, 1,) is undoubtedly erroneous, for in the twenty-sixth year of Asa Baasha was dead, and his son Elah began to reign. 1 Kings xvi, 8. We think, with Rawlinson, that the simplest emendation is to substitute *twenty* for *thirtieth* in both verses. Then

we may suppose that previous to the war with Zerah Asa had ten years of peace, (chap. xiv, 1,) and after that war he had peace again until the last year of Baasha's reign, when the latter undertook the war against Judah mentioned in chap. xvi, 1.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Verses 1-6 correspond with 1 Kings xv, 17-22, where see notes. On the date **six and thirtieth year**, see note on chap. xv, 19.

7. **Hanani the seer**—See note on 1 Kings xvi, 1. This prophet and his son Jehu (compare chap. xix, 2) were noted for uttering oracles of rebuke and judgment. They boldly stood up before kings to admonish them of their sins, and to proclaim the threatened judgments of the Almighty. **Therefore is the host... of Syria escaped out of thine hand**—Thus the prophet implies that had Asa assumed the defensive, and fought against Baasha and Ben-hadad, the Syrian host would, like the Egyptian under Zerah, have fallen into his hands.

10. **Asa was wroth with the seer**—Alas, that he whose heart had been encouraged by the words of Azariah (chapter xv, 8,) could not endure the words of Hanani! **A prison house**—Heb., *a house of the stocks*. Gesenius defines the word rendered *stocks* "a wooden frame, in which the feet, hands, and neck of a person were so fastened that his body was held bent." Very different was Rehoboam's action when the prophet Shemaiah rebuked him and threatened judgment. Chap. xii, 5, 6. **Asa oppressed some of the people the same time**—For doubtless some of the people sympathized with Hanani, and were greatly dissatisfied with the king's measures; for many would clearly see that his league with Syria against Israel would in turn give Ben-hadad an advantage over the kingdom of Judah which might in time become disastrous. Asa attempted to suppress the discontent of the people by oppression.

12. **Diseased in his feet**—Perhaps the gout. See note on 1 Kings xv, 23. **Yet in his disease he sought not to**

the Lord—In his disease, as in war with Baasha, he sought other counselors than the prophets of Jehovah.

14. **Buried him in his own sepulchres**—He for some reason had had private tombs excavated in Jerusalem for himself and family, so that, apparently by his own desire, he was not buried in the tombs of the kings of Judah. **Laid him in the bed**—The niche or grave-chamber of the tomb which had been prepared for the king. **Sweet odours and divers kinds of spices**—The use of large quantities of perfumes and spices, especially at the burial of distinguished persons, was common among the ancient Israelites, as well as among other nations. Eighty pounds of spices are said to have been used at the funeral of Rabbi Gamaliel. At the funeral of Herod the Great five hundred servants attended as spice bearers. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus gave a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes for the burial of Jesus. See John xix, 39, note. **A very great burning**—Not the burning of the dead body, for that practice was very rare in Israel; but a burning of fragrant spices, which was customary at the funerals of kings. Asa's funeral was distinguished by the unusually large quantity of spices burned on the occasion.

## CHAPTER XVII.

The account of Jehoshaphat's reign extends on to the beginning of chapter xxi, being much more fully written here than in the Book of Kings. The kingdom of Judah prospered more under his reign than under that of any other king, and the chronicler seems to take delight in recording the numerous measures for the welfare of the realm which evince the caution, prudence, wisdom, enterprise, and piety of this distinguished son of Asa.

1. **Strengthened himself against Israel**—Asa had shown a fear of Israel, and rather than venture war had hired the help of Ben-hadad, (chap. xvi, 1-3;) but his son Jehoshaphat prepared at the beginning of his reign to withstand opposition from his northern neighbour. Rawlinson also suggests that a reason

for Jehoshaphat's strengthening himself against Israel may have been the alliance which Ahab had then recently formed with the king of Zidon by marriage with his daughter Jezebel. 1 Kings xvi, 31.

2. **Cities of Ephraim, which Asa . . . had taken**—Compare the note on chap. xv, 8.

3. **The first ways of his father David**—The first or earlier ways of David are contrasted with his later ways "in the matter of Uriah," and his sin in numbering the people. The Septuagint omits the word *David*, and some have therefore thought it an interpolation, and understand the earlier ways of Asa to be intended.

4. **Not after the doings of Israel**—Such as the worship of the golden calves, and more particularly the Baal and Asherah worship, which was at that time gaining strength in the northern kingdom.

6. **His heart was lifted up**—That is, exalted with holy faith and courage. **Took away the high places**—Yet, in spite of all his efforts and successes in this matter, the people had become so addicted to these practices that their destruction was not thoroughly secured. See note on chap. xiv, 3, and compare chap. xx, 33.

7. **He sent to his princes . . . to teach**—He committed the matter of teaching to their oversight and care, and the teaching was done by the Levites and priests, as stated in the next verse. He did well to put down idolatry, but he was wise enough to know that unless the people were instructed, they would soon apostatize again.

9. **The book of the law**—Our Pentateuch, in substantially its present form. "Copies of the whole law were, no doubt, scarce; and therefore Jehoshaphat's commission took care to carry a copy with them."—Rawlinson.

14. **Three hundred thousand**—The numbers in this verse and the four verses following are generally regarded as corrupt. "They imply," observes the writer last quoted, "a *minimum* population of 1480 to the square mile, which is more than three times greater than that of any country in the known

world. It is probable that the original numbers have been lost, and the loss supplied by a scribe who took chapter xiv, 8, as his basis."

### CHAPTER XVIII.

1. **Jehoshaphat had riches... and joined affinity with Ahab**—Probably his riches and honour begat in him "that bloated luxury which eats the core from manly virtue," and in a thoughtless hour he proposed to ally the two kingdoms by the marriage of his son Jehoram with Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. See note on 2 Kings viii, 18. This alliance was the source of numerous woes to the kingdom of Judah, and is the darkest stain upon the otherwise fair fame of Jehoshaphat.

2. **Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him**—Made for him a grand feast, thus seeking to secure his consent to assist him in the war with Syria. It was by such attention, and also by words of hope and promise, that Ahab persuaded Jehoshaphat to join him in the war.

3-34. The rest of this chapter is parallel with 1 Kings xxii, 4-39, where see notes.

### CHAPTER XIX.

JEHOSHAPHAT REBUKED BY JEHU,  
1-3.

1. **Jehoshaphat... returned to his house in peace**—That is, safe; personally uninjured in the battle in which Ahab lost his life.

2. **Jehu**—This prophet had previously exercised his office in the kingdom of Israel, and had foretold the doom of Baasha. 1 Kings xvi, 1, note.

**Went out to meet him**—As he was returning to his house from the war. So Azariah went out to meet Asa as the latter returned from the war with Zerah. Chap. xv, 2. But Jehu received a better treatment from Jehoshaphat than his father Hanani had received from Asa. Chapter xvi, 10. **Shouldest thou help the ungodly**—Such as the idolatrous Ahab, whose kingdom is so largely given over to the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. **Love them that hate the Lord**—Jehosha-

phat's affinity with Ahab's family by marriage exposed him to this charge of loving those that hated Jehovah. Jezebel, and all whom she could influence, seem to have had a hatred towards Jehovah and his worshippers. Comp. 1 Kings xviii, 4; xix, 2. **Wrath upon thee**—Jehovah's indignation, which will result in future woes to Judah.

3. **Nevertheless**—The seer has for Jehoshaphat words of encouragement as well as words of blame, and reminds the king that in taking away **the groves** [the Asherah images, 1 Kings xiv, 15, note] he had shown the true theocratic spirit, which would not fail to be recognized and blessed of God. And this oracle of blame and of praise inspired the king to attempt further reforms.

### JEHOSHAPHAT'S FURTHER REFORMS, 4-11.

4. **He went out again through the people**—The *again* refers to his previous reforms described in chapter xvii. In spite of all his efforts to obliterate idolatry, here and there throughout the kingdom the idol images and worship on "the high places" would again and again appear. Comp. chap. xx, 33.

5. **Set judges in the land... city by city**—Appointed local magistrates in all the principal cities to attend to the administration of justice, according to the directions of the law. Dent. xvi, 18-20. Probably Jehoshaphat discovered irregularities and wrongs in the administration of justice, such as respect of persons, and taking of bribes, (verse 7,) and he accordingly undertook an extensive reform in the matter, and solemnly charged his newly-appointed judges to exercise their office in the fear of Jehovah.

8. **Jerusalem... Levites... priests... chief of the fathers**—From this we need not suppose that no Levites, or priests, or chief fathers were made judges in the other cities. Probably the judges in every city were selected from one or all of these three classes. Comp. 1 Chron. xxiii, 4; xxvi, 29, notes. But at Jerusalem was the supreme tribunal, to which cases came for final

decision. **For the judgment of the Lord**—Equivalent to "all matters of the Lord," in verse 11; that is, all matters pertaining to religion and the worship of Jehovah. **And for controversies**—Civil suits, as distinguished from religious or ecclesiastical; called in verse 11, "all the king's matters."

**When they returned to Jerusalem**—Rather, *and they returned*, etc. That is, the king and his attendants, who went out (verse 4) from Jerusalem to settle the judicial interests of the kingdom, returned. This sentence ought to be connected with the verse immediately following.

10. **Between law and commandment, statutes and judgments**—"That is, in cases where the matter concerns the interpretation and application of the law, and its individual commands, statutes, and judgments, to particular crimes; wherever, in short, there is any doubt by what particular provision of the law the case in hand should be decided."—*Keil*.

11. **Amariah the chief priest**—This dignitary would naturally and of right have oversight of all questions concerning religion and worship, as **Zebadiah... the ruler of the house of Judah**, (that is, the tribal prince, and probably oldest and most honoured representative of his tribe,) would have oversight of all civil suits that came to Jerusalem. **Matters of the Lord... king's matters**—See the note on verse 8.

## CHAPTER XX.

### VICTORY OVER MOAB AND AMMON, 1-30.

1. **Moab, and... Ammon**—These nations on the east of the Dead Sea seem to have made no attempt against the kingdom of Judah since the time of their disastrous defeat by David. Comp. 2 Sam. vii, 2; xii, 26-30. **Besides the Ammonites**—This is doubtless a corrupt reading, and by a simple transposition of letters in the Hebrew text we have *Mennim*, or *Muonites*, instead of *Ammonites*. The Maonites, or Mehunims, seem to have been a nomadic tribe in the vicinity of Mount Seir.

Comp. chap. xxvi, 7; 1 Chr. n. iv, 41; and Judges x, 12. Instead of *besides the Ammonites*, we should read, then, *and with them some of the Muonites*.

2. **From beyond the sea**—That is, the Dead Sea. **On this side Syria**—Better, *from Edom*. The reading *מִסְרָא*, from *Aram*, or Syria, is so unsuitable that there is sufficient reason to substitute *מִסְרָא*, from *Edom*. Compare the same error in the text of 2 Sam. viii, 13. The invading army approached Jerusalem from the direction of Edom, having marched around the southern end of the Dead Sea. **Hazazon-tamar** was the more ancient name of **En-gedi**, the modern Ain Jidy, on the western shore of the Dead Sea. See at Gen. xiv, 7, and Josh. xv, 62.

5. **Before the new court**—This was probably the outer, or great court, (chap. iv, 9,) where the people were wont to assemble. It is spoken of as **in the house of the Lord**, because it belonged to, and so was a part of, the temple in the wider sense in which the term *house of Jehovah* was sometimes used. It is called the *new court*, either because it had recently been repaired and renovated by Asa or Jehoshaphat, or because it was a later arrangement than the inner court of the priests. The tabernacle had only one court, but Solomon or David seems to have planned this second or outer court as something new. Jehoshaphat stood *before* this new court, that is, at its entrance into the inner court, and there, in the presence of the congregation, offered the beautiful and appropriate prayer that follows.

6-12. This prayer should be compared with that of Asa, (chap. xiv, 11,) and parts of Solomon's at the dedication of the temple. Chap. vi, 28-31.

14. **Jahaziel... of Mattaniah**—This *Mattaniah* is generally supposed to be the same as *Nethaniah*, mentioned in 1 Chron. xxv, 2, 12. By the gift of the Spirit on this occasion Jahaziel became immortal in the history of Israel, and so the chronicler was careful to register his genealogy. He was lifted from the rank of a mere singer to that of a most distinguished prophet of Jehovah.

16. **They come up by the cliff of Ziz**—Better, *the ascent, or pass, of Haz-ziz*. This was the rocky mountain pass above Ain Jidy, that leads from the shore of the Dead Sea at that point up into the hill country of Judah. The name still lingers in the tract of table land called *el Husassah*, just northwest of the pass towards Tekoa. So these enemies of Judah came "by the very same route," says Robinson, "which is taken by the Arabs in their marauding expeditions at the present day, along the shore as far as to Ain Jidy, and then up the pass and so northwards below Tekoa." **The brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel**—This *brook*, or valley, was one of the wadies running from the vicinity of Tekoa to the Dead Sea—perhaps the Wady Jehar, whose name may be the representative of the ancient *Jeruel*, and the desert of Jeruel must have corresponded nearly with the modern tract *el-Husassah*.

17. **Stand . . . and see the salvation of the Lord**—So Moses commanded Israel when Jehovah was about to destroy their enemies in the Red Sea. Compare Exod. xiv, 13, 14.

19. **The Korhites**—Descendants of Korah, who was also a son of Kohath, but mentioned particularly here, as it would seem, on account of the prominence of his children on this occasion.

20. **Wilderness of Tekoa**—Tekoa was situated on a broad eminence twelve miles south of Jerusalem, (see note on 2 Sam. xiv, 2,) and the *wilderness* here referred to was the desert country that lay just beyond it towards the Dead Sea. Thus it corresponded very nearly with "the wilderness of Jeruel," verse 10.

21. **And that should praise the beauty of holiness**—Literally, *and those singing praise according to the beauty of holiness*. The versions and interpreters have expressed this passage variously. Bertheau, Keil, and Rawlinson understand a reference to the beautiful garments and holy attire of the singers. But it seems better to understand the *beauty* (or ornament) of holiness in the spiritual sense of the blessed and beautiful state of soul in which these singers praised Jehovah.

22. **The Lord set ambushments against . . . Ammon, Moab . . . mount Seir**—The word rendered *ambushments* is מארבים, *liers in wait*. Compare Judges ix, 29. A measure of uncertainty must ever rest upon the question, Who were these liers in wait? They were not men of Judah, for these were not to fight. Verses 15, 17. Nor were they portions of the invading army, who, by mistake, fell to fighting one another, for such could not be properly called *liers in wait*. Many expositors, ancient and modern, think that they were angels sent by God to confuse and overthrow the enemies of his people. But it would be very strange for the sacred writer to call angels "liers in wait." Had he meant angels he would most likely have said so. More probably the ambush was composed of a band of daring marauders, not belonging to either army, who, greedy for spoil, attacked the combined army unexpectedly and with such fury as to put them all in confusion, and "every man's sword was turned against his fellow." Compare Judges vii, 22, and 1 Sam. xiv, 20. Perhaps these marauders themselves perished in the general fray. In all this the sacred writer saw the hand of Jehovah.

23. **Ammon and Moab stood up against . . . Seir**—The fight first turned almost wholly against the Maonites from the vicinity of Mount Seir, (note on verse 1,) and when they were utterly cut off the Ammonites and Moabites went to destroying one another.

24. **Watchtower in the wilderness**—The tower near Tekoa, which commanded a wide view over the neighbouring desert. Compare chap. xxvi, 10; 2 Kings ix, 17, note.

26. **The valley of Berachah**—That is, *the valley of blessing*, so called from the blessings and rejoicings of that day. This valley is doubtless to be identified with the modern Wady Bereikut, lying a little west of Tekoa.

28. **They came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps**—It was one of the most magnificent triumphal enterings into Jerusalem that had ever been witnessed, and it was celebrated accordingly.

31-37. Compare notes on the parallel passage, 1 Kings xxii, 41-49.

34. **Who is mentioned in the book of the kings**—Literally, as in the margin, *who was made to ascend on the book*, etc. The Septuagint renders it, *who wrote, or described*, (κατέγραψεν,) *the book of the kings*. Vulgate, *the words of Jehu the son of Hanani, which he arranged (digessit) in the books of the kings of Israel*. But most modern critics take the words to mean that Jehu's work was incorporated in the book of the kings of Israel.

37. **Eliezer... prophesied against Jehoshaphat**—This fact is mentioned only by the chronicler, and shows that Jehoshaphat was twice censured by the prophets for his connexion with the kingdom of Israel. Compare the rebuke of Jehu in chapter xix, 2, 3. These rebukes, and the evils which resulted from his alliance with the northern kingdom, are a cloud upon the memory of Jehoshaphat, but, on the whole, the general character of his administration was, as Stanley observes, "such as to leave behind the recollection of a reign of proverbial splendour."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### REIGN OF JEHORAM.

This chapter is parallel with 2 Kings viii, 16-24, but is a fuller record of Jehoram's reign. The additions are the following:—

The names, wealth, and slaughter of "his brethren," the sons of Jehoshaphat, verses 2-4. What motives led Jehoram to destroy these princes we are not told. Some think he coveted their wealth, the "great gifts of silver, and of gold, and of precious things, with fenced cities in Judah," which they had received from their father. Verse 3. Others think it was because they disapproved of his idolatrous practices, and his marriage with the daughter of Ahab.

11. **He made high places in the mountains**—Thus undoing, or setting at naught, the labours of his pious father, who had exerted himself with marked though not complete success, (compare chap. xvii, 6, xx, 33,) to take

away this stone of stumbling from Israel. **Caused... Jerusalem to commit fornication**—A common scriptural metaphor for idolatry. **Compelled Judah**—In thus using violence to seduce the people to idolatry, Jehoram was probably influenced by his wife, Athaliah, who would fain have introduced a foreign idolatry into the kingdom of Judah as her mother Jezebel had done into the kingdom of Israel.

12. **There came a writing to him from Elijah**—Here it appears that Elijah was still on earth in the days of Jehoram, and after the death of Jehoshaphat. Though we might naturally infer the contrary from the order of the narrative in 2 Kings, where Elijah's ascension is recorded before the reign of Jehoram, yet such an inference is by no means necessary. The writer of Kings wished to group together the miracles of Elisha, and it was natural for him first to record the ascension of that master, Elijah, whose spirit rested so mightily upon his successor. So in his account of Elijah's departure and of Elisha's miracles he did not aim for chronological order, but for the grouping of certain assimilated facts. Some expositors, however, think that as Elijah committed the anointing of Hazael and Jehu (compare 1 Kings xix, 15, 16, with 2 Kings viii, 13, and ix, 1-3, notes) to his servant Elisha, he may also have commissioned Elisha, or some other prophet, to announce, after his ascension, this threatening prophecy to Jehoram; and so, coming from that departed prophet, whose name had been a terror to Ahab, it would be like a voice from the other world calling to the wicked king of Judah. But this hypothesis seems to be entirely unnecessary, for there is no valid evidence that Elijah had yet ascended. His ministry was chiefly in the northern kingdom, and hence this is the only notice we have of him in Chronicles; but it shows that he did not overlook the religious interests of Judah.

The prophet's epistle charges upon Jehoram two great crimes—1) his compelling Judah into idolatry, and 2) the

slaughter of his brethren. And for these crimes he announces a twofold punishment—1) a stroke of Divine judgment upon his people, children, wives, and goods, (verse 14,) and 2) a dreadful, incurable disease. Verse 15.

14. **A great plague**—Margin, *a great stroke*. It was the judgment of disastrous war, as shown in verses 16, 17.

15. **Great sickness by disease of thy bowels**—Appropriate punishment for him who had no “bowels of compassion” for his own brethren, who were better than himself. Jehoram’s “incurable disease,” as described in this verse and in verses 18, 19, must have been of the most loathsome and excruciating character. “Trusen holds this disease to have been a violent dysentery, being an inflammation of the nervous tissue of the whole great intestine, which causes the overlying mucous membrane to decay and peel off, which then falls out often in tube-shape, so that the intestines appear to fall from the body.”—*Keil*.

16. **The Philistines, and . . . Arabians**—These nations had been tributary to Jehoshaphat, (chap. xvii, 11,) but under his wicked son they revolted, and Jehovah used them as his rod of anger to punish Jehoram, as he had foretold. Verse 14. “Southern Arabia was originally occupied by Cushites, or Ethiopians, (Gen. x, 7,) whose descendants still exist in the modern *Mahra*, a remnant of the Himyaritic Arabs. ‘The Arabians that were near the Ethiopians’ were probably Joktanian Arabs from the neighbourhood of these Cushites.”—*Rawlinson*.

17. **Brake into it**—Made a forcible irruption into the kingdom, and captured many of the chief cities, if not Jerusalem itself. **Carried away all the substance that was found in the king’s house, and his sons also, and his wives**—This most naturally implies the capture of Jerusalem and the plunder of the royal palace. And yet, it must be confessed, that such a plunder of the capital city is usually described in a more direct and unmistakable way. Compare chap. xii, 9; xxv, 24; 2 Kings xiv, 13. Keil therefore argues that the capital was not

captured, and that “the substance that was found in the king’s house” was the treasures belonging to the king’s family, which were stored in various cities, villages, and castles of the kingdom. 1 Chron. xxvii, 25. He supposes also that the king’s sons and wives were captured, not in Jerusalem, but in the camp of the men of Judah, (chapter xxii, 1,) where they were surprised and taken by the enemy. Owing to the brevity of the narrative, the exact sense is somewhat obscure; but we cannot resist the conviction that the king of Judah’s wives would scarcely have been found in the camp, and the whole passage is most easily and naturally explained by supposing that, on this occasion as on a number of others, Jerusalem was broken into, and largely plundered by the invading forces.

19. **His people made no burning for him**—As they did for Asa his grandfather. Chap. xvi, 14, note.

20. **Departed without being desired**—That is, unregretted, unwept, unhonoured. His people were rather glad to be rid of such a king. **Not in the sepulchres of the kings**—Those tombs, it was thought, would have been dishonoured and defiled by the burial there of one so abandoned and accursed of Jehovah.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### AHAZIAH’S REIGN, 1-9.

The reign of this king is narrated in 2 Kings viii, 25-29; ix, 16, 27, 28; where see notes. A comparison of the two accounts will show some differences, but one supplements the other. **The camp**, in verse 1, is probably to be understood of the Jewish camp, in which the older sons of Jehoram were surprised and slain by a band of lawless marauders who accompanied the Arabians to this war.

### ATHALIAH’S USURPATION, 10-12.

See the notes on the parallel passage, 2 Kings xi, 1-3.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

This chapter describes the overthrow of Athaliah, and the elevation of Joash to the throne. The writer gives more

prominence to the part the Levites took on the occasion, and describes the arrangements of the guard somewhat differently from what we find it in the Book of Kings; but there is no real disagreement between the two accounts, and in all essential respects they are identical. See the notes on 2 Kings xi, 4-21.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

This chapter agrees in the main with 2 Kings xii, but it contains several important additions, namely, the account of the king's marriage and family. (verse 3;) of Athaliah's breaking up the temple, and appropriating the dedicated things to the service of Baalam, (verse 7;) and the whole section from verse 15 to 22, showing how Joash came to depart from the truth.

#### DEATH OF JEHOIADA, 15, 16.

15. **A hundred and thirty years old**—Longevity without parallel since the days of the patriarchs. Compare Gen. xlvii, 9. A number of critics, however, regard the number as corrupt, and propose to substitute one hundred and three, or eighty-three. This aged priest had been as a sun and a shield to his people. He had preserved the royal seed of David from destruction, delivered the kingdom from the curse of Athaliah's rule, exalted Joash to the throne, and counseled him in the ways of Jehovah, and lived long to guard and strengthen his reign. Well might a grateful people bury him "among the kings," and remember and chronicle the "good" he had done in Israel. The death of this high priest is mentioned as the turning-point in the reign of Joash. When his priestly friend and counsellor was gone, he was soon led astray by evil advisers, and thus brought judgment upon himself and his people.

#### DEFECTION AND WICKEDNESS OF THE KING AND THE PEOPLE, 17-22.

17. **The princes of Judah**—Whether these were the same who assisted in the overthrow of Athaliah, or a younger class of men, we have no means of knowing. Probably, how-

ever, they were the sons of those who helped Joash to the throne, and had grown tired of Jehoiada's rigid observance of the law, and wished for a change.

18. **They left**—King and princes left, and multitudes of the people soon followed them. **Left the house of the Lord**—Forsook the temple service. **Groves and idols**—The *Asherah* worship involved idolatry. See note on 1 Kings xiv, 15.

20. **Zechariah the son of Jehoiada**—The son and successor of the aged priest nobly **stood above the people**, (that is, took a bold and elevated position before them,) and rebuked their evil ways, and so became a martyr. The memory of this dark crime became fixed in Jewish tradition, and according to the Talmud, the martyrs' blood continued to bubble, like blood yet warm, upon the pavement of the court, until the temple was destroyed by Nebuzaradan, who, it is said, slew eighty thousand young priests to avenge the blood of Zechariah. This legend shows what a hold the martyrdom of the high priest took upon the Jewish mind. The "Zacharias, son of Barachias," to whom our Lord referred, is to be identified with this Zechariah. See Matt. xxiii, 35, note. His blood, crying from the ground like that of Abel, was heard yet in Messiah's day, as if repeating, "The Lord look upon it, and require it." Verse 22.

The writer proceeds to show that Joash and his people were speedily punished for their sins by the Syrian invasion, and the king himself soon after fell by the hand of assassins. The remainder of the chapter is to be compared with 2 Kings xii, 17-21. One writer supplements the other, though both accounts are brief. The difference in the names of the conspirators (verse 26) is doubtless owing to a corruption of the text.

### CHAPTER XXV.

#### REIGN OF AMAZIAH.

The reign of this king is, on the whole, more fully detailed in this chapter than in the corresponding passage

of 2 Kings xiv, 1-22. The principal additions are: 1) The preparations for the Edomite war, verses 5-10; 2) The capture and casting from the rocks of Petra of ten thousand children of Seir, verse 12; 3) The depredations of the Israelite whom Amaziah had offended, verse 13; 4) Amaziah's introduction of Edomite idolatry, and his controversy with the prophet who rebuked him, verses 14-16.

We observe that in the earlier part of his reign, when as yet "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord," he obeyed the counsel of the man of God, who warned him not to depend on Israelitish soldiers, (verses 7-10;) but after he had introduced Edomite idolatry into the kingdom, he spurned the prophet who admonished him of his evil, and persisted in his evil ways. Verses 15, 16. He thus, as the prophet on withdrawing gave him warning, rejected Jehovah's counsel, and thereby sealed his own downfall. The chronicler, in accordance with one main purpose of his writing, points out that Amaziah's ruin followed soon after this, and "came of God," (verse 20,) as a penal judgment for his idolatry.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### REIGN OF UZZIAH.

We are indebted to this chapter of Chronicles for the most we know of the acts and character of Uzziah. The brief notices of him in 2 Kings xiv, 21, 22, and xv, 1-7, mention only the general character of a part of his reign, his building of Elath, and the mere fact of his suffering from leprosy. In the present chapter we have, 1) A general account of his buildings, wars, riches, army, and great fame, (verses 1-15;) and 2) of his pride, sacrilege, leprosy, and death. Verses 16-23. On the names *Uzziah* and *Azariah*, see 2 Kings xv, 1, note.

2. **Built Elath**—Commonly written *Elath*; situated on the eastern arm of the Red Sea. See on 2 Kings xiv, 22. **After that the king slept with his fathers**—That is, after the king Amaziah, his father, slept with his fathers. These words indicate that Uzziah forti-

fied Elath at the beginning of his reign, and soon after his father's decease, and the work seems to have been a very notable act of his reign.

5. **He sought God in the days of Zechariah**—Of this Zechariah we know nothing more than that he had understanding in the visions of God. He was a prophet, perhaps also a priest, who acted as a spiritual adviser to the king. **As long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper**—Thus the chronicler continually impresses upon his reader the moral lessons of history.

6. **Warred against the Philistines**—He would avenge, and, as far as possible, restore, the losses his kingdom had sustained from these enemies in Jehoram's time. Compare chap. xxi, 16, 17. **Brake down the wall of Gath**—This city had been taken by Hazael of Syria in the days of Joash. 2 Kings xii, 17. **Jabneh**—Represented in the modern Yebna, near the Philistine coast. The same as *Jabneel* in Josh. xv, 11, where see note. **Ashdod**—The most powerful of the Philistine cities. See note on Joshua xi, 22.

7. **And against the Arabians**—These also injured Israel in the days of Jehoram. Chap. xxi, 16. The position of *Gur-baal* is unknown; but from its association here with the **Mehunims**, we infer that it was somewhere in the vicinity of Mount Seir. On the *Mehunims*, or *Maonites*, see notes on chapter xx, 1; 1 Chronicles iv, 41; and Judges x, 12.

8. **The Ammonites gave gifts to Uzziah**—That is, they paid tribute to him, as the Philistines and Arabians had done to Jehoshaphat. Chapter xvii, 11.

9. **Built towers... at the corner gate**—Thus repairing and fortifying the city at the places where it had been broken down by Joash. Chap. xxv, 23; 2 Kings xiv, 13, note. **The valley gate**—The gate opening westward into the valley of Hinnom, probably at the place of the modern Jaffa gate. **The turning of the wall**—Perhaps a bend or angle in the wall near the north-east corner of Zion. See note on Neh iii, 19.

**10. Towers in... desert**—Such towers were a necessity on exposed frontiers, where marauding parties were wont to surprise and plunder all who kept not a lookout against such plunderers. Compare chapter xx, 24; 2 Kings ix, 17; xvii, 9. **Digged many wells**—

Better as the margin, *cut out many cisterns*. In a desert country, where there are no springs, it was necessary to form such cisterns to catch and hold rain water, which falls in Palestine only in winter months.

**The low country**—The *Shephelah*, or plain of Philistia, whose territory Uzziah had conquered, verse 6. **The plains**—

Hebrew, *the mishor*; the upland plateau beyond the Jordan. **In Carmel**—In this connexion the margin is the better rendering, *in the fruitful fields*, for Mount Carmel was not under Uzziah's control. **Heloved husbandry**—Literally, *loved the ground*; but the common version gives the true sense. The whole verse testifies to the agricultural enterprise of Uzziah.

**14. Habergeons**—Coats of mail. See note on 1 Sam. xvii, 5.

**15. Engines...to shoot arrows and great stones**—These must have been of somewhat similar construction to the Roman *ballista* and catapults—enormous bows or springs, set in a wooden framework, and so contrived as to hurl with the greatest violence both darts and stones.

**16 When he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction**—

His great power, wealth, and fame fostered in him a disposition to feel that nothing was too good for him and nothing was above him. Thus "pride" went "before destruction... a haughty spirit before a fall." **Went into the temple...to burn incense**—"With a lofty feeling of his power, Uzziah wished to make himself high priest of



his kingdom, like the kings of Egypt and of other nations."—*Keil*. Here was Uzziah's great sin. It is not mentioned in Kings, though its punishment is mentioned there. Such sacrilege and invasion of the priest's office demanded the opposition from the priests and the punishment from God which it so promptly received.

**18. They withstood Uzziah**—Azariah and his assistants were too full of zeal and respect for the law and service of Jehovah not to resist such high-handed offence.

**19. The leprosy even rose up in his forehead**—A judgment as sudden and signal as that which smote Miriam and Gehazi. Num. xii, 10; 2 Kings v, 27. The offence was such as to demand swift and signal retribution.

**21. A several house**—Free from, or apart from, others, as the law required. Lev. xiii, 46; Num. v, 3. See note on 2 Kings xv, 5. **Jotham his son was over the king's house**—Thus the son was *pro-rex* some time before his father's death.

**23. In the field of the burial**—In 2 Kings xv, 7, we have simply, "they buried him with his fathers in the city

of David." But here it appears that he was not buried in the royal sepulchre, but in a burial plot belonging to the kings. This was doubtless on account of his leprosy.

### CHAPTER XXVII.

REIGN OF JOTHAM. (Compare 2 Kings xv, 32-38.)

This chapter furnishes us a fuller record of Jotham's reign than we find in Kings, but is, nevertheless, only a brief notice of a few of his principal works. Unlike his father, he ventured not with sacrilegious step to enter the temple of Jehovah, and so was better than he. On the whole, the general character of his reign showed in him a purpose and desire to do "that which was right in the sight of the Lord."

His principal works were: 1) "The high gate of the house of the Lord," called "the higher gate" in Kings: probably the northern gate of one of the courts of the temple. 2) "On the wall of Ophel he built much." Ophel was the southern slope of the temple mountain, and here recent excavations have revealed a great wall, fourteen feet thick, running southward from the southeast angle of the Haram area, and having every appearance of having been built for purposes of fortification. Probably it is the very ancient wall built by Jotham, and subsequently strengthened by Manasseh. Chapter xxxiii, 14. 3) "Cities in the mountains of Judah;" probably store cities. 4) "In the forests he built castles and towers." He thus sought to put all parts of his kingdom in a state of security and defence.

His only war of which we have any definite account was "with the king of the Ammonites." The Ammonites paid tribute to Uzziah, his father, but for some reason revolted from Jotham. This rebellion, however, was effectually subdued, and the king received from them large amounts of silver and wheat and barley for three successive years. The chronicler is careful to show that Jotham's prosperity was "because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God;" that is, he established or made

his ways firm before his God by a ready obedience to the Divine law.

But verse 7 shows that Jotham had "wars," and 2 Kings xv, 37, shows that the great Syro-Israelitish war began during his reign. This war, however, did not greatly affect Judah till in the reign of Ahaz.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

REIGN OF AHAZ.

Compare parallel history in 2 Kings xvi, and notes there. Many important incidents narrated there are omitted here, but most that the chronicler records is omitted in Kings, so that the writers largely supplement each other, and give us so much the fuller history of Ahaz. The chronicler especially makes prominent the fact that notwithstanding all his reverses in war with the various nations, he sinned more and more unto the last.

In Kings we learn that Jerusalem was besieged by Rezin and Pekah, but not taken. Here, however, we learn how great were Judah's losses in this war. The numbers of the slain and of the captives seem very large, and are regarded as corrupt by many critics. But we must remember that the purpose of this war was to annihilate the kingdom of Judah, and therefore there is no sufficient reason to reject the numbers here given as incredible.

In verse 7 we are informed that an heroic Ephraimite, named Zichri, "slew Maaseiah the king's son." This could hardly have been a son of Ahaz, who was only twenty years old at the beginning of his reign, (verse 1,) and could not have had a son old enough to go to war at this time. It was, perhaps, a son of Jotham, or some officer of the royal court who commonly bore this title. Comp. chap. xviii, 25. It is not said, however, that he was slain in battle; and it is possible that a youthful son of Ahaz might have been captured among the two hundred thousand women and children who were taken at this time, and slain because he was the king's son. This Ephraimite seems to have been ambitious to destroy any members of the royal house, for he also

slew "Azrikam the governor of the house," probably the king's chamberlain, like Ahishar in 1 Kings iv, 6, "and Elkanah that was next to the king," his prime minister, or chief counsellor.

The account of the release and return of the Jewish captives, (verses 9-15,) is of peculiar interest. It shows that among multitudes of the northern kingdom there were not altogether wanting a reverence for the prophets, and a sympathy for the house of Judah. Why the captives were returned to Jericho, (verse 15,) does not appear. Perhaps most of them had their homes in this part of the land.

The chronicler also informs us that, taking advantage of the reverses of Ahaz, the Edomites and Philistines invaded Judah from the south and southwest, carried off captives, and took possession of a number of cities in the Shephelah, or low country. Verses 17, 18.

**23. He sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus**—This occurred during the progress of the Syrian wars, and before the fall of Damascus. Compare note on 2 Kings xvi, 10. Among the gods of Damascus which Ahaz worshipped were Rimmon (2 Kings v, 18) and Hadad.

**24. Shut up. . . doors of the house of the Lord**—This, of course, suspended the temple service, and so matters remained till the first year of Hezekiah, Comp. chap. xxix, 3, 7. Ahaz seems to have acted on the thought that the erection of altars in every corner of Jerusalem rendered the service of the temple superfluous, and so he closed its doors, put out the sacred lamps, and brought its daily service to an end. So in wickedness and idolatry Ahaz surpassed all his predecessors in Jerusalem. On account of his great wickedness he was not buried in the royal sepulchre.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

The history of Hezekiah occupies four chapters in Chronicles and three in Kings. The chronicler dwells at length on the religious reformation accomplished by this king, while the

writer of Kings gives a fuller account of his wars with Assyria, his sickness, the miracle of the dial of Ahaz, and his reproof by Isaiah for showing his treasures to the ambassadors of Bero-dach-baladan. In numerous minor items one writer supplements the other. Verses 1 and 2 of this chapter correspond with 2 Kings xviii, 1-3.

## RESTORATION OF THE TEMPLE SERVICE, 3-36.

**3. He in the first year. . . first month, opened the doors**—The *first month* is here to be understood of the first month of the Jewish year, the first of Abib, or Nisan. Comp. chap. xxx, 2, 3. But the first month of Hezekiah's reign may also, at least in part, have synchronized with the month Nisan. The reformatory character of Hezekiah's reign was thus signalized at its very beginning by an act which must have cheered every pious heart in the realm. The shutting of the doors of the temple, and the consequent suspension of the sacred service, (comp. verse 7,) had been one of the most presumptuous sins of Ahaz. Chap. xviii, 24. **Repaired them**—By plating and overlaying them with gold, and probably other kinds of metal. See 2 Kings xviii, 16, note. This verse is a summary statement of what Hezekiah did at the beginning of his reign, and is not to be thought of as taking place before the gathering of the priests and Levites, and the address to them contained in verses 4-11.

**4. Into the east street**—Probably the same as "the street of the house of God," (Ezra x, 9,) the broad open place before the temple, either in the outer court, or on the east of it.

**5. Sanctify now yourselves**—That is, ceremonially, by purifying yourselves from all legal defilement. This was necessary in order that they might properly **sanctify the house of the Lord** by removing from it all its defilements. Comp. 1 Chron. xv, 12-14. **Carry forth the filthiness**—The abominations of idolatry which Ahaz had introduced, and also the dust and dirt that had accumulated there. Comp. verse 16, note.

6. **Our fathers have trespassed**—He calls no names, but means Ahaz and his contemporaries.

7. **Shut up the door**—See chapter xxviii, 24, note.

8. **The wrath of the Lord was upon Judah**—The afflictions which are mentioned in this verse and the following were those which Judah suffered under the reign of Ahaz, and which are described in the previous chapter. **To astonishment**—An object of such great ruin as to astonish beholders. **To hissing**—An object of scornful derision.

11. **My sons**—The king speaks kindly, as the father of all the people whom he rules. **Be not negligent**—Literally, *do not go astray*.

15. **By the words of the Lord**—The exact sense of this phrase is here doubtful. It may mean, either that the king's commandment was given by inspiration of God or was based upon the words of his law; or **דבריו**, rendered *words*, may here mean *things*, and the meaning be as expressed in the margin, *in the business of the Lord*: that is, the king's commandment in respect to the Lord's matters, namely, the cleansing of the temple. This last is on the whole the more preferable exposition. Comp. chap. xxx, 12.

16. **Brought out all the uncleanness**—The Hebrew word rendered *uncleanness*, here, is different from that rendered *filthiness* in verse 5, and seems to include other things besides idolatrous objects. But in what all this uncleanness and filthiness consisted we are not told.

17. **They began on the first day ... and in the sixteenth day ... they made an end**—Their exact order of procedure is to be gathered from the whole passage, and the supposable natural order of things. First, of course, the priests and Levites were assembled and addressed by the king, (verses 4-11;) next they sanctified themselves, (verse 15;) then they proceeded to repair the doors and cleanse the courts of the temple, and had this work done **on the eighth day of the month**. The cleansing of the temple itself occupied another eight days, so it was

not until the sixteenth of the month that their work was accomplished.

19. **The vessels, which ... Ahaz ... cast away**—See chap. xxviii, 24. Verses 20-36 describe the rededication of the temple, and should be compared with our author's description of its first dedication by Solomon, especially the passages, chap. v, 11-14, and vii, 4-11. The passage calls for no verbal comments, but we should note with what emphasis it is stated in verse 24 that an atonement and sin offering were made for "all Israel," as if at this new dedication of the temple they would obliterate the memory of old national strifes and divisions, and consecrate the whole nation as an unbroken community to God.

In public national offerings it was customary for the priests to slay and flay the victims, but on this occasion "the priests were too few," (verse 34,) and were accordingly helped by "their brethren the Levites." We are also informed that the Levites were more upright and prompt to purify themselves from past defilement than the priests. It is commonly supposed that the priests had been more implicated in the idolatrous practices of Ahaz than the Levites, and therefore many of them were slow of heart to respond to Hezekiah's call to sanctify themselves. Urijah, the high priest, sacrilegiously participated in the imieties of Ahab. Comp. 2 Kings xvi, 11, 16.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE CELEBRATION OF THE PASSOVER.

1. **Hezekiah sent to all Israel**—Already had he caused an atonement to be made for "all Israel," (chapter xxix, 24,) and now he seeks by special invitations to urge the several tribes of the northern kingdom to unite with Judah at the ancient temple in keeping the passover. **Ephraim and Manasseh**, though a part of *all Israel*, are specifically mentioned because of their historical importance.

2, 3. **To keep the passover in the second month**—The law expressly allowed those to keep the passover in the second month who, for special

reasons, were unable to keep it in the first. The reasons were uncleanness by reason of a dead body, and absence on a journey afar off. See Num. ix, 10, 11. **At that time**, that is, in the first month, both these reasons, virtually, prevented most of the nation from holding the passover, **because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently, neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem**. So the priests were ceremonially unclean, and the people were absent.

**5. They had not done it of a long time**—לרב, here rendered of a long time, means rather, in a multitude, or in great numbers. The sense of the passage is, that the Israelites of the whole land had not observed the passover in a great multitude, as directed in the law. The law required the execution of every one who neglected the passover. Num. ix, 13.

**6. The posts**—Hebrew, *the runners*; probably officers of the royal body-guard. **The remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the kings of Assyria**—This passage by no means necessarily implies the downfall of the northern kingdom, nor does any thing in the history of this passover necessitate or require the conclusion of Keil, that it was held subsequent to the final captivity of the ten tribes; for Pul, and Tiglath-pileser, (1 Chron. v, 26,) and Shalmaneser, (2 Kings xvii, 3,) had carried many Israelites into exile before the first year of Hezekiah's reign.

**10. They laughed them to scorn**—They had no mind for reunion, and years of alienation and false worship had prepared them to treat with derision Hezekiah's proposition.

**11. Nevertheless, divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulun... came to Jerusalem**—Also, as appears from verse 18, certain representatives of Ephraim and Issachar were present, so that, with Judah and Benjamin, at least seven of the ancient tribes were represented at this passover.

**14. Took away the altars that were in Jerusalem**—That is, the numerous idolatrous altars that had been erected by Ahaz. Chap. xxviii, 24.

**15. The priests and the Levites were ashamed**—Because of their uncleanness and their lack of zeal for Jehovah's worship. The zeal of others, and the thought of their own tendency to idolatry, put them to the blush. In verse 3, and chap. xxix, 34, we learn that the delinquents were chiefly priests; but here it appears that there were Levites also who had not sufficiently sanctified themselves. **Sanctified themselves**—Or, *had sanctified themselves*; that is, previously to the fourteenth day of the month, so that they were ceremonially fit on that day to minister in the passover offerings. **Into the house of the Lord**—Into the court of burnt offerings, where the brazen altar stood.

**16. They stood in their place after their manner**—Priest and Levite occupied each his prescribed place, and performed each his prescribed work according to the law—the priests to sprinkle the blood, (see Lev. i, 5; iii, 2,) the Levites to assist in any work that might be required. In the present instance the Levites killed the paschal victims. Verse 17. "According to the Mishna, the custom was for the priests to stand in two rows extending from the altar to the outer court, where the people were assembled. As each offerer slew his lamb the blood was caught in a basin, which was handed to the nearest priest, who passed it on to his neighbour, and he to the next; the blood was thus conveyed to the altar, at the base of which it was thrown by the last priest in the row. While basins full of blood were thus passed up, empty basins were passed down in a constant succession, so that there was no pause or delay."—*Rawlinson*.

**17. The Levites had the charge of the killing**—This was because the people were not sufficiently sanctified to slay their own paschal lambs. Ordinarily the offerer slew his own victim.

**18. Many of Ephraim and Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves**—Being at a distance and unfamiliar with the ceremonial requirements, they had nevertheless responded to Hezekiah's call, (verse 11,) and the king decided that

in their case an exception should be made, and he accordingly **prayed** the **Lord** to **pardon** the defect. In this prayer of Hezekiah we note that loftier view of worship which discerns, in the pure desire of an humble heart, something better than bondage to the mere letter of the law.

20. **Healed the people**—Their ceremonial and moral defilement is spoken of as a sickness. They were healed of their religious infirmity.

22. **Hezekiah spake comfortably unto all the Levites**—Hebrew, *spoke to the heart*. He spoke encouraging and cheering words to them, commending their zeal and wisdom. **That taught the good knowledge of the Lord**—Rather, *who were proficient in a good understanding of Jehovah*; that is, well skilled to perform their part of the sanctuary service.

26. **Since the time of Solomon . . . there was not the like in Jerusalem**—At the dedication of the temple Solomon had held a feast fourteen days, (chap. vii, 9,) and probably this was the first time since then that any feast had been continued fourteen days in Jerusalem. Neither had there been since Solomon's day a passover at which so many of the tribes had been represented, and over which there had been such enthusiasm and general joy.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### DESTRUCTION OF IDOLATRY, 1.

1. **All Israel that were present**—All the representatives of the Israelitish nation that were present at the passover just described. Hezekiah deemed this a most appropriate occasion to overthrow idolatry in his kingdom, and as far beyond it as he might be able, and lost no time in turning the present religious zeal of the people to this object. Having already purged Jerusalem from idolatry, (chap. xxx, 14,) he now proceeded first to the cities of **Judah**, and destroyed all idolatrous images and altars that he found, and put an end to all idolatrous practices in the boundaries of **Judah and Benjamin**. Then he carried his iconoclasm even into **Ephraim also and Manas-**

**seh**, for probably the representatives of these tribes who had been at the passover were now so filled with zeal for the pure worship of Jehovah that they were unwilling that Hezekiah's reforms should be confined solely to the southern kingdom; and such was their energy and fury in this work, and such the weakness of Hoshea's government at Samaria, that there was no power to resist or stop this overthrow of images and altars **until they had utterly destroyed them all**. No doubt these images and altars were again restored in Ephraim and Manasseh, for those tribes persisted in their sinful practices until, in the sixth year of Hezekiah, Samaria was taken, and the ten tribes were carried into exile. 2 Kings xviii, 10.

### REORGANIZATION OF THE LEVITES, 2-21.

2. **The priests and the Levites after their courses**—The suspension of the temple service by Ahaz had disarranged the courses and work of the Levites, and so it behoved Hezekiah to re-organize these courses according to the divisions and arrangements which David had made. 1 Chron. xxiii, 6; xxiv, 1. **In the gates of the tents of the Lord**—Literally, *in the gates of the camps of Jehovah*; that is, the gates leading to the temple and its courts. The courts and chambers of the temple are spoken of as a fortified camp, even a group of camps, in which Jehovah's ministers constantly watched and worshipped.

3. **The king's portion of his substance**—That tithe or share of his revenue which it was deemed proper for the king to contribute for the maintenance of the regular worship. Hezekiah made himself no exception, but rather made himself an example for others by contributing his full share of lambs, bullocks, flour, oil, etc., (compare chap. xxxii, 28, 29,) which were required in the continual and special services according to the law.

4. **The portion of the priests and the Levites**—That which was secured to them by the provisions of the law. Num. xviii, 9-24.

6. **Laid them by heaps**—Literally, *gave heaps, heaps*; that is, they brought and laid them in *many* heaps or piles.

7. **The foundation of the heaps**—The beginning of the piles, or collections, of corn, wine, and oil. They began to heap up their stores of material for the continual service.

11 **Prepare chambers in . . . house of the Lord**—Probably the side chambers described in 1 Kings vi, 5-10 had been formerly used for similar purposes, but having been disused for some time they needed special preparation to fit them for storing the abundance of the offerings that had been brought, and laid in heaps.

Verses 12-19 treat of the storing and distribution of the tithes and dedicated things. We note the chronicler's peculiar care to record the names of those charged with these Levitical duties.

14. **The porter toward the east**—The chief Levite who was stationed at the east gate. 1 Chron. xxvi, 14, 17. **The oblations of the Lord**—Such parts of the offerings as belonged to the priests. Lev. ii, 3, 10; vii, 14. **The most holy things**—See Lev. vii, 1, 6.

15. **In the cities of the priests**—The Levitical cities of the realm. **To give to their brethren by courses**—To distribute regularly to the priests and Levites in their several cities such portions of the tithes contributed by the king and people as belonged to them. "The most holy things" could be distributed and eaten only in the holy place; (Lev. vii, 6;) but other things for the sustenance of the priests and their families were distributed at their cities. **To the great as to the small**—That is, the older and the younger.

16. This verse should be translated thus: *Except the register of males from three years old and upward, belonging to all such as had come to the house of Jehovah, to the daily portion for their service in their offices, according to their courses.* That is, the sons three years old and upward of those priests who went to Jerusalem to serve their course, usually accompanied their fathers, and ate their daily portions with them in the holy place, so that no distribution was made

in the Levitical cities for those who were at the time on service at the temple.

The exact grammatical construction of verses 17, 18, and 19 is not clear, but the meaning of the writer seems to connect itself with the phrase in verse 15 rendered "in their set office." The six Levites there named were set in the cities of the priests, not merely "to give," or distribute what belonged to the priests and Levites, but also to attend "to the genealogy of the priests by the house of their fathers, and the Levites from twenty years old and upward," (ver. 17,) "and to the genealogy of all their little ones," etc., (verse 18,) and also to attend to all similar matters appertaining to "the sons of Aaron the priests." Verse 19. Thus did king Hezekiah succeed in making all practicable arrangements for the permanent organization and support of the priestly and Levitical orders.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### SENNACHERIB'S INVASION AND DEFEAT, 1-23.

1. **And the establishment thereof**—Literally, *and this truth*; allusion to the "good and right and truth," (chap. xxxi, 20,) which Hezekiah wrought. **Sennacherib . . . came**—Verses 1-8 are to be understood of Sennacherib's first invasion of Judah, and are parallel with 2 Kings xviii, 13-16, where see notes. A comparison of the two passages will show that this is largely supplementary to Kings, informing us of the provision Hezekiah made for defending his capital against the Assyrian invader.

3. **To stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city**—The object was thereby to distress the enemy, by preventing him from obtaining water near the city. He probably not only hid the springs from view, but drew off the water by secret aqueducts into the city.

4. **The brook that ran through the midst of the land** is probably the Gihon, and the work wrought on it identical with what is more fully described in verse 30. See also 2 Kings xx, 20, note.

5. **The wall that was broken**—What particular part of the walls, and when and how they were broken, is not told. Rawlinson suggests that they had fallen by neglect and carelessness in the reign of Ahaz, or by the natural process of decay, and were hastily repaired with the ruins of neighbouring houses. Isa. xxii, '0. **Raised it up to the towers**—The Hebrew text reads, literally, *he brought up upon the towers*, but the meaning is obscure. The text seems to be defective, and the most plausible emendation is, *he raised up towers upon it*; that is, he built towers upon the wall. Perhaps he merely fortified the towers which Uzziah had built. Chap. xxvi, 9. **Another wall without**—Thought by some to be the wall of the lower city, but the reference is uncertain. **Millo**—The ancient fortress or rampart which David built on Zion. See note on 2 Sam. v, 11.

6. **The street of the gate of the city**—This is indefinite, but may most naturally be understood of a broad open space in front of the principal gate of the city, perhaps the northern gate, or "gate of Ephraim." 2 Kings xiv, 13; Neh. viii, 16. **Spake comfortably**—Encouragingly. Compare chap. xxx, 22, note. Hezekiah's words of faith and encouragement, as here given, do not well accord with his submission and payment of treasure to the invader, as recorded in 2 Kings xviii, 14–16. But the records are by no means contradictory. Together they furnish a lesson of human weakness. The people for awhile were encouraged by Hezekiah's words, (verse 8,) but when Sennacherib had captured "all the fenced cities of Judah," (2 Kings xviii, 13,) they probably became disheartened, and Hezekiah himself trembled for the safety of his capital, and was glad to hire the invader to depart.

Verses 9–23 are a brief summary of the events of Sennacherib's second invasion. This is much more fully detailed in 2 Kings xviii, 17–19, 37, where see notes. The rest of the chapter (verses 24–33) is also an abbreviation of what is more fully recorded in 2 Kings xx.

27. **Pleasant jewels**—Rather, *precious vessels*. The reference may be to jewels or to splendid furniture.

28. **Cotes for flocks**—Rather, *flocks for the stalls*. He not only provided stalls for cattle, but cattle for the stalls.

33. **In the chiefest of the sepulchres**—Or, *in the ascent of the sepulchres of the sons of David*—This may mean either a slope or ascent leading to the royal sepulchre, or some elevation above the sepulchre—a higher place than that where the other kings were buried. Perhaps there was no more room in the sepulchre of David.

### CHAPTER XXXIII.

Verses 1–10 agree almost verbally with 2 Kings xxi, 1–9, where see notes. Verses 11–19 are additional and supplementary to Kings, informing us of Manasseh's captivity in Babylon, and his consequent humiliation, restoration to his kingdom, and reforms.

11. **The captains of the host of the king of Assyria**—This king of Assyria was Esar-haddon, the son and successor of Sennacherib. This we learn from the statement that they **carried him to Babylon**, for Esar-haddon was the only Assyrian monarch, so far as we can find, who had a palace and held his court at Babylon. Also, in an inscription now in the British Museum, Esar-haddon says: "I transported into Assyria men and women innumerable. I counted among the vassals of my realm twelve kings of Syria, beyond the mountains, Balou, king of Tyre, *Minasi, king of Judah*," etc. The king himself seems not to have been present in person at the capture of Manasseh, but left it to the management of the captains of his host. **Took Manasseh among the thorns**—Rather, took him *with hooks*; an ignominious and humiliating mode of dealing with a distinguished and offensive captive, which prevailed among the Assyrians. See 2 Kings xix, 23, note. **Bound him with fetters**—Hebrew, *with double brass*. See note on Judges xvi, 21. It was this bitter treatment that speedily led the captive king to humble himself before God, and repent of his sins.

**13. Brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom**—Ewald suggests that this restoration of Manasseh was done by Esar-haddon's successor, as an act of clemency at the beginning of his reign; just as Evil-merodach signalized the beginning of his reign with an act of kindness to the captive Jehoiachin. 2 Kings xxv, 27-30. But whether restored by Esar-haddon or his successor, Manasseh was so effectually humiliated that the king anticipated from him no further trouble.

**14. He built a wall without the city of David**—A wall on the north side of the city, (as we infer from the description that follows,) where besieging armies pitched their camps, and where, accordingly, there was need of the strongest possible fortifications. Whether this was a new wall, first built by Manasseh, or the repair and strengthening of an older one, cannot be positively determined, but the expression *built a wall*, points rather to the erection of a new wall. **On the west side of Gihon**—Rather, *westward to Gihon, in the valley*. The description seems to begin from the centre of the northern wall, and pass first *westward* to the valley, (either of Gihon, which was the northern part of the Hinnom valley, or of that branch of the Tyropœon which begins near the modern Yaffa gate,) and then eastward **even to the entering in at the fish gate**, which was near the northeast corner of the ancient city. Neh. iii, 3, note. **Compassed about Ophel**—The southern slope of Moriah, on whose wall Jotham had "built much." See note on chap. xxvii, 8. Manasseh strengthened and completed this work of his great-grandfather. **Raised it up a very great height**—This wall, as exposed by modern excavations at Jerusalem, is found at present to be over seventy feet in height. "Upward of fifty shafts," says Captain Warren, "were sunk about Ophel in search of the wall. Eight of these shafts were in connexion with the line of wall which is now found to extend as far as seven hundred feet from the first tower in a southeasterly direction along the eastern ridge of Ophel."

**18. His prayer unto his God**—This seems to have been a memorable document, and worthy of record in the royal annals, but it has not been preserved. The apocryphal "Prayer of Manasseh" is later and spurious. **The words of the seers**—The warnings and rebukes which certain unnamed seers or prophets of his time uttered against the king. A specimen is given in 2 Kings xxi, 10-15.

**19. His prayer also**—The same prayer referred to in the previous verse. The writer simply adds in this verse that the prayer and other things concerning Manasseh were also **written among the sayings of the seers**—Our translators took this to be a general reference to several well-known prophetic works which contained accounts of Manasseh's reign, for the Hebrew word is the same as that rendered *seers* in the preceding verse. But the form of the word is different, and to sustain the common version we must assume a textual error, and read הוֹזַי instead of הוֹי. For this there is no external authority, and we have no other instance of such a general reference to written authorities. Whenever the chronicler refers to a written document he always mentions its author. Hence most modern critics take הוֹי as a proper name, *Chozai*, (or *Hosai*, as in the margin,) and understand that the acts of Manasseh were written by one named *Hozai*, of whom, however, we have no other mention.

Verses 21-25 describe the reign of Amon, but add nothing of importance to the account in 2 Kings xxi, 19-26, where see notes.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

The reign of the good Josiah, as recorded in this chapter and the following, agrees in the main with 2 Kings xxii-xxiii, 30, but as in a number of other cases, one writer largely supplements the other. The present narrative is chronologically more exact than that of Kings, for by omitting any mention of Josiah's earlier reforms, the writer of Kings connects all his work of reformation with the discovery of the book of the law in the eighteenth

year of Josiah's reign, and so falls into the inaccuracy of seeming to place all Josiah's reforms after the discovery of the law.

Verses 1 and 2 correspond with 2 Kings xxii, 1, 2, where see notes. Verses 3-7 describe Josiah's early piety, and the reforms which took place in the twelfth year of his reign, when he was twenty years old. The remark in verse 3, that in the twelfth year of his reign **he began to purge idolatry from Judah and Jerusalem**, sufficiently indicates, in connexion with what is elsewhere written, that all his reforms were not completed in these earlier years of his reign. Among the things he mentions here may be some things that occurred later, just as in 2 Kings xxiii, 4-14 there are mentioned events that occurred before the discovery of the book of the law.

**6. Cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali**—The northern kingdom having been long since broken up, and the new colonists from the East having no power or special care to hinder him, Josiah probably met with no great opposition in overthrowing "all the idols throughout all the land of Israel."

Verse 7. **With their mattocks**—Margin, *with their mauls*; others, *with their swords*. Fürst connects the phrase with "burnt the bones" in the preceding verse, and then renders the phrase "in their palatial resting-places," that is, their princely graves or mausoleums. Gesenius adopts the *Kethib*, and renders "he proved their houses," that is, examined the houses of the idolaters. But we incline to the view of Bertheau, who adopts the *Keri*, and

points it thus בְּחִרְבֵּיהֶם: the meaning then is, as the same word is translated in Psalms cix, 10, *in their desolate places*, or, *in their ruins*. Josiah overthrew idolatry in the cities named, which were many of them in ruins, and all of them, perhaps, might have been spoken of as desolate places. But notwithstanding their ruin, many signs of their old idolatry remained.

The remainder of the chapter (verses

8-33) is substantially identical with 2 Kings xxii, 3-20, and xxiii, 1-3, where see notes.

**11. To floor**—Margin, *to rafters*. Gesenius, *to furnish with beams*. Fürst, *to build up*. Our version, *to floor*, probably expresses the sense as nearly as any. **The houses which the kings of Judah (Amon and Manasseh) had destroyed** are to be understood of the houses and chambers of the priests in the temple and its courts.

**12. All that could skill of instruments**—The word *skill* in the sense here intended is obsolete; we should render, *all that were skilled in instruments of music*.

**13. Of the Levites... scribes**—On the ancient office of the scribe, see note on 2 Sam. viii, 17. "Here," says Rawlinson, "we have come to a new state of things—an order of scribes, forming a distinct division of the Levitical body, has been instituted. It has been well observed, that though the class-term is first found in this passage, the class itself probably originated in the reign of Hezekiah. When that monarch employed men to copy out the uncollected proverbs of Solomon, (Prov. xxv, 1,) a class of scribes must have been instituted. It is probably to the rise of this class that we are indebted for the preservation of so many prophecies belonging to Hezekiah's time, while the works of almost all previous prophets—Ahijah, Iddo, Shemaiah, Jehu the son of Hanani, and probably many others—have perished."

**33. All his days they departed not from... the Lord**—He succeeded in keeping down all open idolatry, but he did not root its evil leaven out of the hearts of all the people. See the note at 2 Kings xxiii, 25.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE SOLEMN PASSOVER, 1-19.

In accordance with his manner of dwelling more fully on what is religious and ritualistic, the chronicler gives the greater part of this chapter to a description of Josiah's passover, while the writer of Kings despatches it in three verses. 2 Kings xxiii, 21-23.

It was a most solemn and imposing service, and in the strict adherence to the law in which it was observed, the peculiar interest attending it, and perhaps also in the numbers that were present, it was distinguished above all other passovers held since the days of the Judges. It made Josiah's eighteenth year a most memorable epoch, verse 19.

**1. Fourteenth day of the first month**—The time prescribed in the law, (Exod. xiii, 6; Lev. xxiii, 5,) and thus unlike the passover of Hezekiah. Chap. xxx, 2.

**2. Set the priests in their charges**—Arranged them according to their several divisions, or classes, and indicated the duties for which each class would be held responsible.

**3. The Levites that taught all Israel**—Certain Levites were especially intrusted with the work of teaching the people the law of God. Chapter xvii, 9. **Which were holy unto the Lord**—None but holy and consecrated ones could properly approach to or bear the ark. **Put the holy ark in the house**—When and how the ark had been removed from its proper place in the temple is not recorded. Keil's explanation, that the words do not mean a material moving of the ark, but are to be understood in the sense of "Overlook, leave it in the temple, for you are no longer to carry it on your shoulders," is far from satisfactory, and amounts to no more than "Leave it in the place where it has hitherto stood;" a sense which he himself admits the words cannot bear. Equally untenable is the rabbinical opinion, that the words are a command to remove the ark to some subterranean chamber of the temple, where it might be safe in case the temple were destroyed. The words clearly imply that the ark had, for some reason, been removed from its proper place in the oracle, or holy of holies, **which Solomon the son of David king of Israel did build**; and most interpreters suppose that this had taken place during the godless reign of Amon, or, perhaps, of Manasseh, when it was removed either by them to make room for idolatrous

statues, or by some pious priests and Levites in order to protect it from profanation and destruction. The latter supposition is the more probable, for as the book of the law, whose proper place was in the ark, had been removed and hidden in a secret place of the temple, so the ark itself may also have been concealed. **It shall not be a burden upon your shoulders**—The Levites, perhaps, had the impression that it would be appropriate, and in keeping with most ancient usage, to bear the ark about the temple and its courts at the passover; but Josiah reminded them that since Solomon had built a settled place for the ark to abide in, it was no longer to be borne about.

**4. According to the writing of David . . . and . . . of Solomon**—A written arrangement of the families and courses of the Levites which had been made by David and Solomon. Comp. chap. viii, 14.

**7. Josiah gave . . . lambs and kids . . . and three thousand bullocks**—The lambs and kids were for the paschal feast, (comp. Exod. xii, 5,) and the bullocks for an additional freewill offering, and for sacrificial meals during the seven days of the feast.

**8. His princes gave willingly**—That is, as appears in the sequel, the priestly and Levitical princes; the former giving to the priests, the latter to the Levites. As the king contributed of the flock all the lambs and kids for the passover offerings, (verse 7,) the gifts of the princes must have been, like the king's offering of bullocks, for the freewill offerings and various sacrificial meals. Compare the account of Hezekiah's passover, chapter xxx, 13-26.

**12. They removed the burnt offerings**—That is, removed from the slain animals such portions as were to be offered on the altar. "The burnt offerings here," says Bertheau, "can only mean such portions of the paschal lamb as were to be burned upon the altar of burnt offerings; no doubt the same parts as were cut off and burned in the case of sheep and goats when they were offered as thank offerings. Lev. iii, 6-17. As these portions were

burned in precisely the same manner as the burnt offerings, (Lev. i, 9, 17; iii, 11, 16,) they might very well be called *העֹלָה*, the burnt offering, so that

this word is used here in the sense of *עֹלָה*, offering, or sacrifice in general.

This explanation is confirmed by the words at the end of the verse, **and so did they with the oxen.** The oxen themselves, therefore, were not offered as burnt offerings, but the parts appointed were cut off and burned, the rest of the flesh being cooked and eaten." Verse 13.

18. **No passover like to that**—Many passovers had been held in Israel since the days of Samuel, but none so memorable as this one. There was such a solemnity attending it, and such a careful adherence to the directions of the law, and so many representatives of the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel... and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and withal, it was so preceded and followed by a dark record of national apostasy and sin, that it was remembered in Israelitish history as a most bright and blessed ray of light that had streamed through the thick darkness of the deepening night of Judah's decline and fall.

The account of Josiah's death (verses 20-27) is somewhat more fully given here than in Kings, but the principal differences have been sufficiently noted at 2 Kings xxiii, 26-30.

21. **God commanded me to make haste**—This message of Necho to Josiah is preserved only by the chronicler, and is specially interesting as coming from a heathen king. Some have thought that Necho here referred to some prophecy of Jeremiah, (compare 1 Esdras i, 28,) or of some other prophet. But the words are appropriate in the mouth of a monotheistic sovereign, who regarded himself as a favourite of heaven. In an inscription of an Egyptian king of about this period occur the following words, as translated by the Rev. Canon Cook: "Didst thou not know that the Divine shade was over me? I have not acted

without his knowledge; he commanded my acts."

25. **The lamentations**—See Introduction.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

Verses 1-20 of this chapter contain a brief summary of the reigns of Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah, the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of the temple, and the captivity of the Jews. These events are much more fully written in 2 Kings xxiii, 30-xxv, 21, where see the notes.

21. **The word of the Lord by... Jeremiah**—Jer. xxv, 9-12; xxix, 10, and the note on Ezra i, 1. **Until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths**—See Lev. xxvi, 34, 35, 43. We need not assume that the observance of the sabbatic years had been neglected exactly seventy times in succession, or for the period of four hundred and ninety years preceding this exile. But it is probable that during the thousand years between Moses and the Babylonish exile as many as seventy sabbatic years had been neglected, and, at last, judgment that had seemed to slumber long, exacted all.

## THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS, 22-23.

For exposition of these verses, see notes on Ezra i, 1-4.

As the books of Kings end with a notice of Jehoiachin's release from prison, thus shedding a ray of light on Judah's future, (see note on 2 Kings xxv, 30,) so these Chronicles close with a recital of the proclamation of Cyrus, the Lord's anointed shepherd, of whom Isaiah (xliv, 28; xlv, 1) had prophesied long years before as "saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built, and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." It was a sound of grace, the trumpet blast that shook the dry bones of fallen Israel, (Ezek. xxxvii, 1-14,) and raised the nation to a new and purer life. It was the opening of a new age, and our author felt he could not close his work without directing the eye of his reader across the dark gulf of his people's exile to the dawn of a brighter era.









# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EZRA.

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THE Book of Ezra is a continuation of the Chronicles, and the two closing verses of the latter are the same as the first three of the former. See Introduction to Chronicles, page 324. It takes its name from the celebrated priest and scribe who is commonly supposed to have been the author, and of whose acts the last four chapters contain our main account. It covers a period of about eighty years, and affords us our principal information respecting the return of the Jews from the Babylonish exile, the rebuilding of the temple, and the various difficulties encountered in the re-establishing of the Jewish State.

## Language.

A noticeable feature of the book is its diversity of language. It is written partly in Hebrew and partly in Chaldee. When the writer comes, in chap. iv, 8, to give a copy of the letter of the Samaritans to Artaxerxes, he gives it in the language in which it was written to the Persian monarch, and the narrative from that point to chap. vi, 18, which is largely taken up with copies of letters to and from Artaxerxes and Darius, is in the Chaldee or Aramæan language, or, as the English version has it, "the Syrian tongue." See note on chap. iv, 7. The copy of Artaxerxes' letter and decree, given in chap. vii, 12-26, is also written in the same language. The same diversity of language appears in the Book of Daniel, the Chaldee portion extending from chap. ii, 4 to the end of chap. vii. The fact is perfectly in keeping with the age and circumstances of both these writers, who were equally familiar with both languages; and probably most Jews of their time, who were able to read at all, were also equally familiar with both languages, so that when these authors came to use documents written in Aramæan they found it needless to translate them into Hebrew; and so familiar were they with the Aramæan that, having quoted a document in that language, they sometimes passed on to narrate in the same tongue any incident that belonged essentially to the same connexion, or the same occasion. Thus Ezra, in giving the historical connexion between the different letters, (chap. iv, 17, 23, 24; v, 1-7,) and in recording the events that immediately followed Darius' decree, (chap. vi, 13-18,) uses the Chaldee language.

We need not, however, regard Ezra as the author of any part of the sections written in Chaldee. He may have found them already prepared by an older writer in the very form in which he has transferred them to his own pages. With our modern notions, this mixing up of different dialects in one book would be very open to criticism, but with an historian of more than two thousand years ago, and in the peculiar circumstances of Ezra, it is rather an evidence of unconscious simplicity.

### Author and Date.

There is no good reason to dispute or doubt that Ezra himself was the author of this book. In the last four chapters he speaks in the first person, so that those chapters may properly be called Ezra's autobiography. The previous six chapters he doubtless compiled largely from documents made ready for his use. The attempts of some critics to decide the origin and authorship of all the documents thus used are too purely conjectural to be of any value.

The book seems to have been written soon after Ezra's successful measures to reform the new State in the matter of intermarriages with the heathen; hence, apparently, the abrupt termination of the work.

### Contemporaneous Literature.

The prophecies of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, and the books of Nehemiah and Esther, belong to about the same period and class of Hebrew literature. Haggai and Zechariah prophesied in the reign of Darius Hystaspes, and their words were largely instrumental in encouraging the people, and urging on to completion the rebuilding of the temple. The Book of Esther falls, chronologically, between the sixth and seventh chapters of Ezra, for its incidents occurred during the reign of Xerxes, (Ahasuerus,) who succeeded Darius, and reigned about twenty years. Nehemiah and Malachi were contemporaries, and their books are, probably, to be assigned to about the same date. All these books shed light upon the history of the Jews, both in their exile and at the time of their return, and, among other things, show especially how the years and trials of their captivity had thoroughly subdued their spirit, checked their former tendencies to idolatry, and spiritualized their hopes and their thoughts. "Many and great," says Wordsworth, "were the benefits which, under God's good providence, the Hebrew Church derived from the seventy years' captivity. They had learned there, by a severe and holy discipline, that the God of Israel was not a mere local deity, like those of the heathen. They had felt his presence cheering them as they hung their harps on the willows of the waters of Babylon, and in their wanderings through the more than a hundred and twenty provinces of the Per-

sian empire, and they had thus been rescued from the sensuous slavery of mere external forms; they had been purified from idolatry, and had been elevated to a more spiritual communing with God. The open windows of Daniel, looking toward Jerusalem, were, indeed, an evidence of love for the land of his forefathers, and for the appointed ministers of the temple; but they were like the door opened in heaven in the Apocalypse, (iv, 1;) they were an avenue to a holier vista, which opens upward even to the inner sanctuary of the heavenly Zion, and by which the devout soul communes in prayer with the Invisible, who is enshrined in glory there."

### Synchronistic History.

The history of the Persian empire during the period covered by the Book of Ezra is full of great events. The chapter on "Synchronistic World-history," in our Introduction to the Books of Kings, closed with the fall of Babylon and the ascendancy of the Persian dominion in the East. Darius the Mede thereupon took the kingdom of Babylon (Dan. v, 31; ix, 1) and reigned about two years. Meantime Cyrus continued his work of conquest, and upon the death of Darius took the entire control of the vast empire that had fallen into his hands. See note on chap. i, 1. He was succeeded by his son Cambyses, who for years carried on a successful war with Egypt, and subjected that ancient land to the sway of Persia. He is called *Ahasuerus* in chap. iv, 6, where see note on his name and character. While Cambyses was in Egypt the Magian Smerdis usurped the throne, and sought to change the religion of the empire and establish Magianism. He is called in this book *Artaxerxes*, and it is noticeable that under his short reign the enemies of Israel succeeded in putting a stop to the rebuilding of the temple. See note on chap. iv, 7. After a short reign of less than a year he was slain, and Darius Hystaspes became king of Persia. See note on chap. iv, 24. This enterprising monarch, having put down various rebellions, and having established his power in all parts of his empire, began the great campaigns against Greece which are so celebrated in classic history. His were the forces which were destroyed by a tempest off the coast of Mount Athos, and subsequently were so terribly defeated at Marathon. Darius died while engaged in extensive preparations to renew the war with Greece, and his son Xerxes succeeded him, and proceeded to carry out his father's purposes. It was Xerxes who led the all but innumerable army across the Hellespont, and fought the far-famed battles of Thermopylæ and Salamis. After his defeat at the latter place, and his consequent retreat into Asia, he sent his general, Mardonius, with three hundred thousand soldiers, to try once more the fortunes of

battle with the Greeks, but only to suffer the defeat at Platæa, and to find that Persian magnificence was incompetent to cope with Grecian skill. Xerxes was the *Ahasuerus* of the Book of Esther, and it confirms the narrative of that Book that Xerxes is known, after his wars with Greece, to have lost all military ambition, and to have given himself over to the utmost indulgence of sensual passion among the women of his court and harem. He was followed in the kingdom by his son Artaxerxes Longimanus, of whom an account is given in the note on chap. vii, 1. During the forty years' reign of this monarch the principal incidents in the lives of Ezra and Nehemiah took place. He was succeeded by his son, Xerxes II., who was assassinated only forty-five days afterward by his half-brother Sogdianus. The assassin reigned for a year and a half, when he in turn was murdered by another brother, Ochus, who reigned nineteen years, and is known in history as Darius Nothus. This monarch is supposed by most expositors to be "Darius the Persian," mentioned in Neh. xii, 22. After him reigned Artaxerxes Mnemon, who fought the famous battle of Cunaxa with his younger brother Cyrus, and who has been made famous in Grecian history by the brilliant narrative of Xenophon. He is said to have reigned forty-six years. Next came Ochus, reigning twenty-one years, followed by Arses, who reigned about two years, when Darius Codomannus, not a direct descendant of the royal family, attained the throne. He fought the great battles at the Granicus, Issus, and Arbela, with Alexander the Great, but was defeated on every field, and with his fall the Persian empire ended.

### Contents.

The Book of Ezra consists of two parts: the *first* embracing chapters i-vi, and devoted mainly to the account of the rebuilding the temple; the *second* embracing chapters vii-x, and being substantially an autobiography of Ezra for the space of, perhaps, a year. The following table of contents will furnish an index to the Book:—

#### SECTION FIRST.

##### The Rebuilding of the Temple. Chaps. i-vi.

Cyrus's Proclamation to Rebuild the Temple .....	i, 1-4
Preparations to Return from Exile ....	i, 5-11
List of Exiles who Returned with Zerubbabel .....	ii, 1-70
The Feast of Tabernacles kept in the Seventh Month. ....	iii, 1-7
The Foundation of the Second Temple Laid .....	iii, 8-13
The Rebuilding of Temple Suspended. ....	iv, 1-24
The Building of the Temple Resumed. ....	v, 1-2
Interference of Tatnai, the Governor. ....	v, 8-17
Darius's Letter and Decree .....	vi, 1-12
The Temple Finished and Dedicated. ....	vi, 13-18
The Passover Observed .....	vi, 19-22

#### SECTION SECOND.

##### The Acts of Ezra. Chaps. vii-x.

Ezra's going up to Jerusalem .....	vii, 1-10
Artaxerxes' Letter and Decree. ....	vii, 11-26
Ezra's Thanksgiving. ....	vii, 27, 28
Genealogy of Ezra's Companions from Babylon .....	viii, 1-14
The Gathering and Preparations by the River of Ahava .....	viii, 15-30
The Journey to and Arrival at Jerusalem .....	viii, 31-36
Israel's Sin of Heathen Intermarriage made known to Ezra. ....	ix, 1, 2
Ezra's Grief and Prayer .....	ix, 3-15
Putting away the Strange Wives. ....	x, 1-17
List of those that had taken Strange Wives .....	x, 18-44

# THE BOOK OF EZRA.

## CHAPTER I.

**N**OW in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the

*a* 2 Chron. 36. 22, 23; Jer. 25. 12;

### SECTION FIRST.

### THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE.

CHAPS. I-VI.

## CHAPTER I.

CYRUS'S PROCLAMATION TO REBUILD  
THE TEMPLE, 1-4.

1. **The first year**—Not the first year of his becoming sovereign of the Persians, but the first of his immediate rule over Babylon, and the provinces of Western Asia, which had previously belonged to the Babylonian empire. Upon the fall of Babylon, Darius the Mede had taken that kingdom, (Dan. v, 31; ix, 1; xi, 1,) and reigned there for a year or more before Cyrus assumed direct control. Dan. vi, 28. **Cyrus king of Persia**—Concerning the birth and early life of this illustrious man the ancient authors (Herodotus, Xenophon, Ctesias, and Nicolaüs Damascenus) disagree, and it is impossible to decide with certainty whose account is most correct; but all agree that with him the Persian empire arose from comparative insignificance to be the greatest power that had ever ruled all Western Asia. Cyrus's first great act was to defeat Astyages—his grandfather, according to Herodotus and Xenophon—and subject the Medes to the Persians. Soon after, he conquered and added to his empire the ancient kingdom of Lydia, in Asia Minor. Then followed the fall of Babylon and of other kingdoms before his victorious armies. When he began to reign at Babylon he doubtless heard of Daniel,

**LORD** <sup>a</sup>by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, <sup>b</sup>that he

29. 10.—<sup>b</sup> Chapter 5. 13, 14.

and, perhaps, had personal intercourse with him. Some have thought, and not without reason, that this prophet called his attention to Isaiah's oracles concerning him, (Isa. xlv, 28; xlv, 1,) that he should restore the Jews and rebuild the temple, and thus show himself Jehovah's "shepherd" and "anointed" one. **Word of the Lord by...Jeremiah**—See especially Jer. xxv, 12: "When seventy years are accomplished, I will punish the king of



Symbolical figure of Cyrus, (from the Persepolitan Monuments,) and his Name in Cuneiform Characters.

<sup>1</sup>made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing,

1 Hebrew, *caused*

saying, <sup>2</sup> Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath

*a voice to pass.*

Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity." Reckoning from the first invasion of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar, more than a year before he became sole king of Babylon, (2 Kings xxiv, 1, note,) we find just seventy years had elapsed at the first year of Cyrus. Thus Nebuchadnezzar 45, Evil-Merodach 2, Neriglissar 4, Nabonadius 17, Darius the Mede 2=70. Thus the seventy years of Jewish captivity synchronized very closely with the seventy years of the Babylonian empire. Differences of opinion prevail, however, as to the period covered by the seventy years' captivity. Some reckon them from the destruction of the first temple to the completion of the second, 588 to 515 B. C. But Jeremiah's prophecy seems clearly to make the fall of Babylon the *terminus ad quem* of the seventy years, and this would place the *terminus a quo* at Nebuchadnezzar's first invasion of Palestine, when Daniel and other Jewish captives were taken to Babylon. See note on 2 Kings xxiv, 1. Hence, when Babylon fell and Darius was set over that realm, Daniel understood that the seventy years were about expired. Dan. ix, 1. **The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus**—Probably by the words of Daniel, who may have called his attention to Isaiah's prophecies concerning him. It is interesting to observe in this connexion that the religion of the early Persians was monotheistic—the comparatively pure system of Zoroaster; and this may explain the sympathy which Cyrus seems to have had for the Jews, and his readiness, at so early a period of his reign, to allow them to return from exile and rebuild their temple. See on the next verse. **Made a proclamation**—Literally, *caused a voice to pass in all his kingdom*; that is, announced by criers. Not only was the announcement made orally, but it was published **also in writing**, and probably laid up among the archives of the kingdom, from which a copy of it was taken by our author.

2. **Thus saith Cyrus**—"There are probably few things more surprising to the intelligent student of Scripture than the religious tone of the proclamations which are assigned in Ezra to Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes. Compare chap. vi, 8-10; vii, 12, 23. Two things are especially remarkable in these passages—first, the strongly marked religious character, very unusual in heathen documents; and, secondly, the distinctness with which they assert the unity of God, and thence identify the God of the Persians with the God of the Jews. Both these points receive abundant illustration from the Persian cuneiform inscriptions, in which the recognition of a single supreme God—Ormazd—and the clear and constant ascription to him of the direction of all mundane affairs, are leading features. In all the Persian monuments of any length, the monarch makes the acknowledgment that 'Ormazd has bestowed on him his empire.' Every success that is gained is 'by the grace of Ormazd.' The name of Ormazd occurs in almost every other paragraph of the Behistun inscription. No public monuments with such a pervading religious spirit have ever been discovered among the records of any heathen nation as those of the Persian kings; and through them all, down to the time of Artaxerxes Ochus, the name of Ormazd stands alone and unapproachable as that of the Supreme Lord of earth and heaven."—RAWLINSON, *Hist. Evid.*, p. 147.

The same distinguished writer says in another work: "The conquest of Babylon by Persia was practically, if not a death-blow, at least a severe wound, to that sensuous idol-worship which had for more than twenty centuries been the almost universal religion in the countries between the Mediterranean and the Zagros mountain range. That religion never recovered itself—was never reinstated. It survived, a longer or shorter time, in places. To a slight extent it corrupted Zoroastrian-

given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which *is* in Ju-

c Isaiah 44. 28;

dah. **3** Who *is there* among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which *is* in

45. 1, 13.

ism; but, on the whole, from the date of the fall of Babylon it declined. 'Bel bowed down, Nebo stooped,' (Isa. xlv, 1;) 'Merodach was broken in pieces;' judgment was done upon the Babylonian graven images, (Jer. 1, 2; li, 52;) and the system of which they formed a necessary part having once fallen from its proud pre-eminence, gradually decayed and vanished.

"Parallel with the decline of the old Semitic idolatry was the advance of its direct antithesis, pure spiritual monotheism. The same blow which laid the Babylonian religion in the dust struck off the fetters from Judaism. Purified and refined by the precious discipline of adversity, the Jewish system which Cyrus, feeling towards it a natural sympathy, protected, upheld, and replaced in its proper locality, advanced from this time in influence and importance, leavening little by little the foul mass of superstition and impurity which came in contact with it. Proselytism grew more common. The Jews spread themselves wider. The return from the captivity, which Cyrus authorized almost immediately after the capture of Babylon, is the starting-point from which we may trace a gradual enlightenment of the heathen world by the dissemination of Jewish beliefs and practices; such dissemination being greatly helped by the high estimation in which the Jewish system was held by the civil authority, both while the empire of the Persians lasted, and when power passed to the Macedonians."—*Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iii, p. 385.

**Lord God of heaven**—The writer uses *Jehovah*, "LORD," instead of Ormazd, in this edict. A common formula in the Persian inscriptions is, "The great God Ormazd, who gave both earth and heaven to mankind." **Given me all the kingdoms**—In the Behistun inscription, Darius says, "Ormazd granted me the empire. By the grace of Ormazd I hold this empire." **Charged me to build him a house**

**at Jerusalem**—Bertheau thinks that our author entirely recast Cyrus's edict from his own theocratic standpoint. The king's proclamation probably contained abundant references to Ormazd as the God by whose grace and direction he received and administered the kingdom, and our historian, acknowledging no other God than Jehovah, translated the edict in the form we now have it, substituting Jehovah for Ormazd, and otherwise altering it to suit his own religious ideas. This supposition may be partly true. Cyrus did not issue his proclamation in the Hebrew language, and, probably after the manner of the Persian inscriptions, he used the name of Ormazd and not Jehovah, and in these respects our author may have modified the phraseology in his translation; but, granting even this, it is not only possible, but highly probable, that, as Josephus and the older expositors hold, Cyrus had been shown Isaiah's prophecies, where Jehovah says of Cyrus, "He shall say to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." Isa. xlv, 28. Nor is it in the least improbable that Daniel, who stood high in the court of Babylon under Darius and Cyrus, (Dan. vi, 2, 28,) advised Cyrus of Isaiah's prophecies, and also had something to do with the drawing up of this proclamation. The king regarded these prophecies as a divine charge to build the temple.

**3. All his people**—No distinction of Judah and Israel is recognized in this proclamation, but the whole Israelitish population throughout the land is addressed. It was natural, however, that "Judah and Benjamin," the last in exile, in whose hearts the memory of Jerusalem and the fatherland was freshest, were the first and chief ones to respond. Verse 5. **His God be with him... Lord God of Israel, he is the God**—See notes on verse 2 concerning Persian monotheism and reverence for the Supreme God.

Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel, (<sup>d</sup> *he is the God,*) which *is* in Jerusalem. **4** And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place <sup>e</sup> help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, besides the free-will offering for the house of God that *is* in Jerusalem.

**5** Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests,

*d* Daniel 6. 26.—<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *lift him up.*  
*e* Philippians 2. 13.

**4. Whosoever remaineth**—Or rather, *all the remnant*, that is, all the exiles still living. Compare the use of the same word in Neh. i. 2. The word is best taken as nominative absolute, and as for all the remnant. **In any place where he sojourneth**—Rather, *From all the places where he has been dwelling*. This phrase is to be construed with what follows, thus: Let the inhabitants of any place out of all the places where the exiles have been dwelling, help those exiles, etc. **The men of his place**—The non-Israelitish population, or any others who do not accompany the exiles that volunteer to return to Jerusalem. Josephus states that many of the wealthier Jews remained at Babylon, not being willing to leave their possessions there. **Goods**—Movable property; perhaps especially, household goods. **Freewill offering**—Gifts of money, or vessels, or beasts for sacrifice—any oblation that might be deemed appropriate or of value.

#### PREPARATIONS TO RETURN FROM EXILE, 5-11.

**5. Chief of the fathers**—The most aged and venerable men, who were heads of families, and some of whom had seen the former temple. Chap. iii. 12. **Judah and Benjamin**—These tribes, last exiled, were the first to return. Doubtless with them some descendants of other tribes also returned, and when the temple was finished *twelve* he goats were offered at the dedication, according to the number of the twelve tribes. Chap. vi. 17; compare also chap. viii. 35; and 1 Chron. ix. 3. **Priests... Levites**—Without

and the Levites, with all *them* whose spirit <sup>a</sup> God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord which *is* in Jerusalem. **6** And all they that *were* about them <sup>b</sup> strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, besides all *that* was willingly offered. **7** <sup>c</sup> Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, <sup>d</sup> which Nebuchadnezzar

<sup>3</sup> That is, *helped them*.—<sup>f</sup> Chap. 5. 14; 6. 5.  
<sup>g</sup> 2 Kings 24. 13; 2 Chron. 36. 7.

these the temple service could not be properly administered, nor the sacrifices legally offered. **With all**—Bertieau makes *all* in apposition with *fathers, priests, and Levites*, thus:—The chief of the fathers, and the priests and the Levites, in short, all whose spirit, etc. But we prefer to take the preposition *with* (<sup>h</sup>) in the sense of *together with*, showing that others besides the chief fathers and the Levites **rose up** to return to Jerusalem. None, however, either among fathers or Levites, or others, went up except those **whose spirit God had raised**. The word rendered *had raised* is the same as that rendered *stirred up*, in verse 1, and here means *roused up and thrilled with strong desire* to go and rebuild the temple.

**6. All they that were about them**—That is, the neighbours and friends of those exiles who rose up to return, especially the wealthier Jews, who, as Patrick says, "being well settled at Babylon, did not think fit to stir till they saw how these would succeed." **Strengthened their hands**—That is, as the margin explains, *helped them*; assisted and cheered them by the presents and provisions immediately named. This was done in accordance with Cyrus's decree. **Besides all that was willingly offered**—The presents previously named were given by order of the king; but besides these gifts others of the same or similar nature were contributed spontaneously by persons who, unable to go themselves, were anxious to encourage and help those who did go.

**7. The king brought forth the vessels**—He not only ordered others

had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods; 8 Even those did Cyrus king of Persia bring forth by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and numbered them unto <sup>h</sup> Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah. 9 And this *is* the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives, 10 Thirty basins of gold, silver basins of a second sort four hundred and ten,

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 5. 14. — 4 Heb. *the transportation*.

to give, but set the example by himself giving from the treasures of the kingdom. **Nebuchadnezzar had brought**—See 2 Kings xxiv, 13; 2 Chronicles xxxvi, 7; Daniel i, 2. Some of these vessels had been sacrilegiously used by Belshazzar and his lords on that night of revelry when Babylon was taken, and Belshazzar slain. Dan. v, 2, 3.

8. **Sheshbazzar**—The Chaldee or Persian name of the prince of Judah, who is elsewhere called *Zerubbabel*. Chap. ii, 2; iii, 2, 8; iv, 2, etc.; compare chap. v, 16, and Zech. iv, 9. He was the leader and captain of this first band of exiles that returned to Jerusalem, as well as the chief director and superintendent of the rebuilding of the temple.

9. **Chargers**—Basins or cups. Sept. *φικτήρες*; Vulg. *phialæ*, *drinking vessels*. According to Aben Ezra, they were basins used for collecting the blood of lambs. Others take the word in the sense of *baskets*. **Knives**—

**מַחֲלָפִים**. Commonly explained as the slaughter knives by which the sacrificial victims were killed. The feminine form of the same word is used in Judges xvi, 13, 19, for *braids* of hair, whence Ewald conjectures that the meaning here is some sort of vessels adorned with plaited work. Bertheau suggests that they were *coal-pans*, or *censers*, like those mentioned in 1 Kings vii, 50.

10. **Basins**—Cups or goblets with a cover. **Of a second sort**—Of secondary value as to their material, and used in less honourable service than the golden basins. **Other vessels**—Compare the various vessels of the temple mentioned in 1 Kings vii, 45–50.

and other vessels a thousand. 11 All the vessels of gold and of silver *were* five thousand and four hundred. All *these* did Sheshbazzar bring up with *them of* \* the captivity that were brought up from Babylon unto Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER II.

**N**OW \* these *are* the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been car-

<sup>a</sup> Nehemiah 7. 6, &c.

11. **Five thousand and four hundred**—This sum does not agree with the preceding numbers, which are  $30 + 1,000 + 29 + 30 + 410 + 1,000 = 2,499$ . In 1 Esdras ii, 13, 14, the number of vessels mentioned amounts to 5,469. Some expositors think the enumeration of vessels (in verses 9 and 10) includes only the larger and more costly, while the gross sum here mentioned includes all, both small and great, which Nebuchadnezzar carried away. But that explanation is arbitrary and conjectural. The probability is that some of the numbers here are corrupt, but all attempts now to amend the text are mere conjectures.

## CHAPTER II.

LIST OF THE EXILES WHO RETURNED WITH ZERUBBABEL, 1–70.

Of this catalogue we have a duplicate in Neh. vii, 6–73, and both lists were probably taken from the same source—a register of those families and classes who first returned from exile, made at the time of their return, and long preserved as a most interesting document. To any Jew, whose ancestors were among the families named in this catalogue, the document would be of incalculable value. “Their land and their cities,” says Patrick, “had been laid so desolate, and had been so long neglected, and were infested also by such bad neighbours, that it was a great piece of generosity in these men to return thither; and their names are recorded, to the eternal honour of them and of their posterity, they being the first planters of this country after it had been laid waste.”

1. **Children of the province**—By the province the district of Judah is

ried away, <sup>b</sup>whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city; ■ Which came with Zerubbabel:

<sup>b</sup> 2 Kings 24. 14-16; 25. 11; 2 Chron. 36. 20.  
1 Or, *Azuriah*, Neh. 7. 7.

meant, which had Jerusalem for its capital. The *children* or *sons* of this province, like "sons of Greece," "sons of Italy," were those to whom that province was the fatherland. Some of them had probably been born in exile, but doubtless a large proportion of them had been children or youths when their fathers were led into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar. Some were "ancient men that had seen the first house," (chap. iii, 12;) so that this list was largely composed of the same individuals **whom Nebuchadnezzar... had carried away unto Babylon. Every one unto his city**—With most of those in this list it was probably easy to ascertain their native city, and as far as possible the returning exiles would naturally seek their ancestral homes again. Such as "could not show their father's house," (verse 59,) were probably assigned to special districts or towns.

2. **Zerubbabel: Jeshua** — These were the two chief fathers and guides of the people who returned. Both seem to have been born in Babylon, and the name *Zerubbabel* has this signification, from זָרַע, *Zerua*, sown, that is, begotten, and בָּבֶל, *Babel*, Babylon. *Zerub-*

*babel* is called by our author the son of Shealtiel, (chap. iii, 2, 8; v, 2;) so also in Neh. xii, 1; Hag. i, 1, 12, 14; ii, 2; Matt. i, 12; and Luke iii, 27; but according to 1 Chron. iii, 19 he was the son of Pedaiah and nephew of Shealtiel, or Salathiel. How to explain this difference is doubtful. There seems to be no corruption or confusion in the text of Chronicles. Perhaps Shealtiel died childless, and Pedaiah married his widow, and, according to levirate custom, his children were reckoned to his brother. Gen. xxxviii, 8; Dent. xxv, 5, 6. At any rate he succeeded Shealtiel in the genealogy as the head of the

Jeshaa, Nehemiah, <sup>1</sup>Seraiah, <sup>2</sup>Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, <sup>3</sup>Mizpar, Bigvai, <sup>4</sup>Rehum. Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: **3** The children of Parosh, two thousand **a** hundred sev-

2 Or, *Raamiah*.—3 Or, *Mispereth*.  
4 Or, *Nehum*.

house of David during the exile, and he was popularly called the son of Shealtiel, and no one disputed his title or authority. *Jeshua* was the son of Jozadak, the high priest, (chap. iii, 2; Hag. i, 1;) who was carried off among the exiles. 1 Chron. vi, 15. He is associated with Zerubbabel, as if they were the leading spirits and main promoters of the rebuilding of the temple. Chap. iii, 2, 8; iv, 3; v, 2. In two of the symbolical prophecies of Zechariah, (chap. iii, 1-10; vii, 11-15,) *Jeshua* stands as head and representative of the Jewish people. The regal and priestly offices, as represented by these two men, are called in Zech. iv, 14 "the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." Though Zerubbabel was a descendant of David, and *Jeshua* of Aaron, neither the monarchy nor the priesthood was fully restored after the exile. From that time the heart of all Israel began to yearn after Messiah, who should satisfy the noblest ideal of both king and priest. **Nehemiah**—Not the distinguished individual whose history is given in the Book of Nehemiah. Nearly all the individuals whose names occur in this list are otherwise unknown.

This verse contains the names of the chief leaders and elders of the returning exiles. The differences of form between some of the names in this list and that of Neh. vii are shown in the margin. Nehemiah's list contains one name not found in this, namely, *Nuhamani*. Neh. vii, 7. This, with the rest, makes twelve persons who appear as the heads of the new community, and in this number there was, perhaps, a reference to the twelve tribes. The returned exiles thus cultivated the feeling that they somehow represented all **the people of Israel**, the "remnant" of all the ancient tribes. Comp. chap. vi, 17.

The rest of the list proper, which embraces verses 3-63, may be divided into five parts: 1) *The men of the people of Israel*, 3-35; 2) *The priests*, 36-39; 3) *The Levites*, 40-42; 4) *The Nethinim and the children of Solomon's servants*, 43-58; 5) *Persons unable to show lawful genealogy*, 59-63. The following table will show at a glance the differences, especially of numbers, between Ezra and Nehemiah:—

	Ezra.	Neh.
Children of Parosh.....	2,172	2,172
“ Shephatiah.....	372	372
“ Arah.....	775	652
“ Pahath-moab of the children of Jeshua and Joab.....	2,812	2,818
“ Elam.....	1,254	1,254
“ Zattu.....	945	845
“ Zaccai.....	760	760
“ Bani, (Neh., Binnui). ..	642	648
“ Bebai.....	623	628
“ Azgad.....	1,222	2,322
“ Adonikam.....	666	667
“ Bigvai.....	2,056	2,067
“ Adin.....	454	655
“ Ater of Hezekiah....	98	98
“ Bezal.....	323	324
“ Jorah (Neh., Hariph) ..	112	112
“ Hashum.....	223	328
“ Gibbar (Neh., Gibeon) ..	95	95
“ Beth-lehem.....	123	...
(Neh. men of Beth-lehem and Netophah).....	...	188
Men of Netophah.....	56	...
“ Anathoth.....	128	128
Children of Azmaveth, (Nehemiah, Beth-Azmaveth) ..	42	42
“ Kirjath-arim, Chephirah and Beeroth....	743	743
“ Ramah and Gaba....	621	621
Men of Michmas.....	122	122
“ Beth-el and Ai.....	223	123
Children of Nebo, (Neh., men of the other Nebo)..	52	52
“ Magbish, (Nehemiah, no corresponding name).....	156	...
“ the other Elam.....	1,254	1,254
“ Harim.....	320	320
“ Lod, Hadid, and Ono ..	725	721
“ Jericho.....	345	345
“ Senaah.....	3,630	3,930
“ Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua.....	973	973
“ Immer.....	1,052	1,052
“ Pashur.....	1,247	1,247
“ Harim.....	1,017	1,017
“ Jeshua and Kadmiel of Hodaviah, (Nehemiah, Hodevah.) ..	74	74
“ Asaph (singers).....	128	148
“ the porters.....	189	188
Nethinims and children of Solomon's servants....	392	392
Children of unregistered ancestors	652	642
Sum of the numbers in each list.	2,9818	3,1039

	Ezra.	Neh.
Whole congregation.....	42,360	42,360
Man servants and maid servants	7,337	7,337
Singing men and women .....	200	243
Horses.....	736	736
Mules.....	245	245
Camels.....	435	435
Asses.....	6,720	6,720

In the above tables we observe that the numbers in Ezra's list amount to 29,818, and in Nehemiah's to 31,089, and yet according to both lists the entire congregation numbers 42,360. Verse 64 comp. with Neh. vii, 66. The probability is, that neither list is meant to be a perfect enumeration of all the families that returned from exile, but only of such families of Judah and Benjamin as could show an authentic genealogy of their father's house, while the 42,360 includes many persons and families belonging to other tribes who in their exile had lost all certain record of their genealogy, but were, nevertheless, true descendants of some of the ancient tribes. Here is evidence that with the exile the different tribe distinctions, especially in the northern kingdom, became lost, and that multitudes of real Israelites, both among those who returned from exile and those who did not return, thenceforth lost all record of their tribal lineage.

It is also noticeable that Ezra's list mentions 494 persons not recognised in Nehemiah's list, and Nehemiah's list mentions 1,765 not recognised in Ezra's; but if we add the surplus of Ezra to the sum of Nehemiah, ( $494 + 31,089 = 31,583$ ), we have the same result as by adding Nehemiah's surplus to the sum of Ezra's numbers, ( $1,765 + 29,818 = 31,583$ .) Hence it may be plausibly supposed that 31,583 was the sum of all that could show their father's house; that the two lists before us were drawn up independently of each other; and that both are defective, though one supplies the defects of the other. “In some cases,” says Wordsworth, “the author of the list in Ezra seems to have had fuller returns of the families to which the people belonged; in other cases, the returns in Nehemiah are more complete. This was natural, but the coincidences show that the one list confirms the other. It is not surprising

enty and two. **4** The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. **5** The children of Arah, <sup>c</sup> seven hundred seventy and five. **6** The children of <sup>d</sup> Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, <sup>e</sup> two thousand eight hundred and twelve. **7** The children of Elam, <sup>f</sup> a thousand two hundred fifty and four. **8** The children of Zattu, <sup>g</sup> nine hundred forty and five. **9** The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. **10** The children of <sup>h</sup> Bani, six hundred forty and two. **11** The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and three. **12** The children of Azgad, a thousand two hundred twenty and two. **13** The children of Adonikam, six hundred sixty and six. **14** The children of Bigvai, two thousand fifty and six. **15** The children of Adin, four hundred fifty and four. **16** The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight. **17** The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and three. **18** The children of <sup>i</sup> Jorah, a hundred and twelve. **19** The children of Hashum, two hundred twenty and three. **20** The children of <sup>j</sup> Gibbar, ninety and five. **21** The children of Bethlehem, a hundred twenty and three. **22** The men of Netophah, fifty and six. **23** The men of Anathoth, a hundred twenty and eight. **24** The children of <sup>k</sup> Azmaveth, forty and two. **25** The children of Kirjath-arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty and three. **26** The children of

Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one. **27** The men of Michmas, a hundred twenty and two. **28** The men of Beth-el and Ai, two hundred twenty and three. **29** The children of Nebo, fifty and two. **30** The children of Magbish, a hundred fifty and six. **31** The children of the other <sup>l</sup> Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. **32** The children of Harim, three hundred and twenty. **33** The children of Lod, <sup>m</sup> Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and five. **34** The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five. **35** The children of Senaah, three thousand and six hundred and thirty. **36** The priests: the children of <sup>n</sup> Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three. **37** The children of <sup>o</sup> Immer, a thousand fifty and two. **38** The children of <sup>p</sup> Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven. **39** The children of <sup>q</sup> Harim, a thousand and seventeen. **40** The Levites: the children of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the children of <sup>r</sup> Hodaviah, seventy and four. **41** The singers: the children of Asaph, a hundred twenty and eight. **42** The children of the porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, in all a hundred thirty and nine. **43** <sup>s</sup> The Nethinim: the children of Ziha, the children of Hasupha, the children of Tabbaoth, **44** The children of

<sup>c</sup> Neh. 7. 10. — <sup>d</sup> Neh. 7. 11. — <sup>e</sup> Chap. 8. 9. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 8. 7; Neh. 7. 12. — <sup>g</sup> Neh. 7. 13. — <sup>h</sup> Or, *Binnai*, Neh. 7. 15. — <sup>i</sup> Or, *Hariph*, Neh. 7. 24. — <sup>j</sup> Or, *Gibeon*, Neh. 7. 25. — <sup>k</sup> Or, *Beth-azmaveth*, Neh. 7. 28.

<sup>l</sup> See ver. 7. — <sup>m</sup> Or, *Harid*, as it is in some copies. — <sup>n</sup> 1 Chron. 24. 7. — <sup>o</sup> 1 Chron. 24. 14. — <sup>p</sup> 1 Chron. 9. 12. — <sup>q</sup> 1 Chron. 24. 8. — <sup>r</sup> Or, *Judah*, chap. 3. 9; called also *Hodevah*, Neh. 7. 43. — <sup>s</sup> 1 Chron. 9. 2.

that the members of the constituencies of the several families do not always tally in the two lists. By means of levirate marriages, or adoptions, the same persons might indifferently belong to two different father's houses; and if women are reckoned, they might be ranged under the house of their father on one list, and of their husband on another."

In several instances we have the names of *places* instead of men; as *children of Gibeon*, and *Beth-lehem*, (verses 20, 21.) and *men of Netophah*, *Anathoth*, *Beth-el*, etc. The reason of this is not apparent, but the meaning is, that the place named was either the ancestral home of the children or men whose numbers are given, or else it was

the place to which they were assigned on their return from exile.

**7. Children of Elam**—Whether *Elam* is here the name of a place or person is uncertain. As no place of this name is ever mentioned in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and another *Elam* is mentioned in verse 31, the probability is, that in each place *Elam* is the name of a person.

**41. Singers**—See notes on 1 Chron. xv. 16–22.

**42. Porters**—Doorkeepers of the temple. See on 1 Chron. ix. 18.

**43. The Nethinim**—*The given ones*, that is, given to the Levites as hereditary temple servants, to perform for them the menial work of the sanctuary. See on 1 Chron. ix. 2.

Keros, the children of <sup>11</sup> Siahah, the children of Padon, **45** The children of Lebanah, the children of Hagabah, the children of Akkub, **46** The children of Hagab, the children of <sup>12</sup> Shalmal, the children of Hanan, **47** The children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, the children of Reaiah, **48** The children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, the children of Gazzam, **49** The children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, the children of Besai, **50** The children of Asnah, the children of Mehunim, the children of <sup>13</sup> Nephusim, **51** The children of Bakbuk, the children of Haku-  
 pha, the children of Harhur, **52** The children of <sup>14</sup> Bazluth, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, **53** The children of Barkos, the children of Sise-  
 ra, the children of Thamah, **54** The children of Neziah, the children of Hat-  
 ipha. **55** The children of <sup>o</sup> Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of <sup>15</sup> Per-  
 uda, **56** The children of Jaalah, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel,

**57** The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Poche-  
 reth of Zebaim, the children of <sup>16</sup> Ami. **58** All the <sup>p</sup> Nethinim, and the children of <sup>a</sup> Solomon's servants, *were* three hun-  
 dred ninety and two. **59** And these *were* they which went up from Tel-me-  
 lah, Tel-harsa, Cherub, <sup>17</sup> Addan, and  
 Immer: but they could not show their  
 father's house, and their <sup>18</sup> seed, whether  
 they *were* of Israel: **60** The children  
 of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the  
 children of Nekoda, six hundred fifty  
 and two. **61** And of the children  
 of the priests: the children of Haba-  
 iah, the children of Koz, the children  
 of Barzillai: which took a wife of the  
 daughters of <sup>r</sup> Barzillai the Gileadite, and  
 was called after their name: **62** These  
 sought their register *among* those that  
 were reckoned by genealogy, but they  
 were not found: <sup>a</sup> therefore <sup>19</sup> *were* they,  
 as polluted, put from the priesthood.  
**63** And the <sup>20</sup> Tirshatha said unto  
 them, that they <sup>t</sup> should not eat of the  
 most holy things, till there stood up a

<sup>11</sup> Or, *Sia*.—<sup>12</sup> Or, *Shumlai*.—<sup>13</sup> Or, *Nephushesim*.—<sup>14</sup> Or, *Bazlith*, Neh. 7. 54.—  
<sup>o</sup> 1 Kings 9. 21.—<sup>15</sup> Or, *Perida*, Neh. 7. 57.—  
<sup>16</sup> Or, *Amon*, Neh. 7. 59.—<sup>p</sup> Josh. 9. 21, 27;  
 1 Chron. 9. 2.—<sup>q</sup> 1 Kings 9. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Or, *Addon*, Neh. 7. 61.—<sup>18</sup> Or, *pedigree*.  
<sup>r</sup> 2 Sam. 17. 27.—<sup>s</sup> Num. 3. 10.—<sup>19</sup> Heb.  
*they were polluted from the priesthood*.—  
<sup>20</sup> Or, *governor*; see Neh. 8. 9.—<sup>t</sup> Lev. 22. 2,  
 10, 15, 16.

**55. Children of Solomon's ser-  
 vants.**—Descendants of those Canaan-  
 itish slaves upon whom "Solomon  
 levied a tribute of bond service unto  
 this day," (1 Kings ix, 20, 21,) and  
 who probably became incorporated in  
 Israel as proselytes. They were so  
 closely associated with the Nethinim  
 in their nationality and their work  
 that they are here reckoned among  
 them, and classed and numbered with  
 them. Compare verse 58 and Nehe-  
 miah xi, 3.

**59. Tel-melah, Tel-harsa, Cherub,  
 Addan, Immer**—These are the names  
 of cities or districts in Chaldea, but they  
 have not been identified with modern  
 sites. Some take the last three to be  
 names of persons.

**61. The children of Barzillai**—So  
 called, as is immediately explained, be-  
 cause their ancestor, a priest, had mar-  
 ried a daughter of the distinguished  
 Gileadite, who showed great kindness  
 to David. 2 Sam. xvii, 27; xix, 32-39;  
 1 Kings ii, 7. **Their name**—The name  
 of the daughters. Hence the confusion  
 in their genealogy.

**62. These sought their register  
 among those that were reckoned  
 by genealogy**—Literally, *these sought  
 their register—the enrolled* According  
 to Bertheau, *the enrolled* was the title  
 of their register. The English version,  
 however, gives the sense with sufficient  
 clearness. **As polluted, put from  
 the priesthood**—For, according to the  
 law, no stranger might approach the  
 altar to minister. Num. iii, 10; xvi, 40.  
 All priests must be sons of Aaron.

**63. The Tirshatha**—A Persian title  
 of the governor of a district, and, ac-  
 cording to Gesenius, equivalent to *Your  
 Severity*, or *Dread Sovereign*. Nehe-  
 miah is called *Tirshatha*, (Neh. viii, 9;  
 x, 1,) and this title is sometimes inter-  
 changed with פֶּהָה, *governor*. Comp.  
 especially Neh. xii, 26. In our text  
 the title *Tirshatha* is to be understood  
 of Zerubbabel, not, as some have sup-  
 posed, of Nehemiah. **Not eat of the  
 most holy things**—For strangers  
 could no more lawfully eat of the hal-  
 lowed things, such as the remnant of  
 the meat offering, (Lev. ii, 3,) than they

priest with <sup>u</sup>Urim and with Thummim. **64** <sup>v</sup>The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore, **65** Besides <sup>w</sup>their servants and their maids, of whom <sup>there</sup>were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and <sup>there were</sup>among them two hundred singing men and singing women. **66** Their horses <sup>were</sup>seven hundred thirty and six; their mules, two hundred forty and five; **67** Their camels, four hundred thirty and five; <sup>their</sup>asses, six thousand seven

<sup>u</sup> Exod. 28. 30; Num. 27. 21.—<sup>v</sup> Neh. 7. 66, &c.  
<sup>w</sup> Isa. 14. 1, 2.

could minister at the altar. Compare marginal references. **A priest with Urim.**—By whom the uncertain genealogy might be settled, and the divine will in the matter be determined. In the former times such matters had been settled by inquiring through those **Urim** and **Thummim** on the ephod of the high priest. See 1 Sam. xxx. 7, 8, and notes on Exod. xxviii. 30, and Josh. i. 1. From this verse it appears that these sacred media of learning the divine counsel had been lost during the captivity, and we have no reliable record that they were ever replaced.

**65-68. Servants... horses... camels.**—To some of these the returning Jews were helped by their wealthy friends and neighbours who remained in Babylon, (chap. i. 4, 6;) but probably not a few of the wealthy themselves returned with all their possessions to Judah; and of their substance that they had acquired in the land of exile, they **offered freely for the house of God.** These wealthy ones were doubtless those who followed the advice of the prophet Jeremiah, and built houses and planted gardens, and made the most of their opportunities to improve and prosper while in exile. Jer. xxix. 5, 6, 28. **In his place.**—Rather, *upon its foundation*; and these were to be lain on the site of the previous temple. On the site of the Solomonic temple, see note at the beginning of 1 Kings vi.

**69. Threescore and one thousand.**—Literally, *Six myriads and one thousand.* **Drams of gold.**—Rather, *gold darics.* These were a coin current in the Persian empire from the

hundred and twenty. **68** <sup>\*</sup>And *some* of the chief of the fathers, when they came to the house of the Lord which is at Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place: **69** They gave after their ability unto the <sup>†</sup>treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold, and five thousand pounds of silver, and one hundred priests' garments. **70** <sup>\*</sup>So the priests, and the Levites, and *some* of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinim, dwelt

<sup>z</sup> Neh. 7. 70.—<sup>y</sup> 1 Chron. 26. 20.—<sup>z</sup> Chap. 6. 16, 17; Neh. 7. 73.

time of Cyrus onward, probably till the spread of the Macedonian power over the East. Gold darics have been discovered bearing on one side the figure of a king, with a bow in one hand and a lance or javelin in the other, and on the other side a figure of uncertain meaning. The coin weighs 128 grains,



and is valued at \$5 52. The whole amount of gold, then, contributed by these wealthy fathers was \$336,720—a gift worthy of the occasion. **Five thousand pounds of silver.**—The Hebrew word here rendered *pounds* is מָנִים, *manim*, that is, *mina*. The silver mina or maneh is valued at \$32, so that the whole amount of silver here named would be \$160,000. Nehemiah's numbers are different. Neh. vii. 70-72. He says the Tirshatha gave 1,000 gold darics, 50 basins, 530 priests' garments. Some of the chief fathers gave 20,000 darics, and 2,200 silver mina; and the rest of the people gave 20,000 darics, 2,000 mina, and 67 priests garments; so that the gross sum in Nehemiah is 41,000 darics, 4,200 mina, 597 priests' garments, and 50 basins. Bertheau thinks Nehemiah's text is the more accurate and complete; but here again, as in the lists above, one table may supplement the other, so that neither is in itself complete.

in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

### CHAPTER III.

**A**ND when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. **2** Then stood up <sup>1</sup>Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and <sup>2</sup>Zerubbabel the son of <sup>a</sup>Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer

<sup>1</sup> Or, *Joshua*, Hagai 1. 1; 2. 2; Zechariah 3. 1.—<sup>2</sup> Called *Zorobabel*, Matthew 1. 12; Luke 3. 27.—<sup>a</sup> Matthew 1. 12; Luke 3. 27, called *Luthiel*.

**70. In their cities**—The cities assigned them as their future homes. With many these cities were ancestral homes. **All Israel**—The entire community of returned exiles who now represented the Israelitish nation.

### CHAPTER III.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES KEPT IN THE SEVENTH MONTH, 1-7.

**1. The seventh month**—Of the first year of the return from exile. The seventh month was called *Ethanim*, sometimes *Tisri*, and was fixed upon by Solomon for the dedication of his temple. See notes on 1 Kings viii, 2. As this month fell in our October, it is commonly thought that these Israelites left Babylon in the preceding spring, in March or April. **Were in the cities**—That is, had become numbered and settled in their homes in the various towns and cities round about Jerusalem. **As one man**—So promptly and with such accord did the entire new community assemble, that it was like the coming of a single individual.

**2 Then stood up**—To lead and direct the people in the work and worship for which they had come together. **Jeshua... Zerubbabel**—See note on chap. ii, 2. Here priestly work is the main subject of the context, and Jeshua, the priest, is named first; in other passages where the government of the people, or building matters, form the chief topic, Zerubbabel is named first. Compare verse 8, chap. ii, 2; iv, 3, etc. **Builded the altar**—This was their first care. Before the temple is com-

burnt offerings thereon, as *it is* <sup>b</sup>written in the law of Moses the man of God. **3** And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear *was* upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, *even* <sup>c</sup>burnt offerings morning and evening. **4** <sup>d</sup>They kept also the feast of tabernacles, <sup>e</sup>as *it is* written, and <sup>f</sup>offered the daily burnt offerings by number, according to the custom, <sup>g</sup>as the duty of every day required; **5** And

<sup>b</sup> Deut. 12. 5.—<sup>c</sup> Num. 28. 3, 4.—<sup>d</sup> Neh. 8. 14, 17; Zech. 14. 16, 17.—<sup>e</sup> Exod. 23. 16.—<sup>f</sup> Num. 29. 12, &c.—<sup>g</sup> Heb. *the matter of the day in his day*.

menced they provided for the proper offering of the daily and special sacrifices. **The law of Moses**—This had been sacredly preserved, and existed in book form; but during the exile the masses of the people had so far lost the use of their ancient language that they needed to have the law not only read, but expounded in their hearing. Neh. viii, 1-8.

**3. Upon his bases**—Rather, *upon its foundation*. מְכוֹנָתוֹ is here to be understood, as in chap. ii, 68, where it is rendered *place, of foundations* laid upon its ancient site. **For**—This particle introduces the first prominent reason for their speedy erection of the altar. **Fear was upon them**—Literally, *in fear upon them*. **Because of the people of those countries**—The surrounding population, whose hostile attitude towards the returned exiles began already to show itself, and soon after caused great troubles, and caused the rebuilding of the temple for a long time to cease. Chap. iv. They hoped by sacrifice and offering to secure the help of Jehovah against their foes.

**4. Kept... feast of tabernacles**—Called also the feast of ingathering, because it was celebrated in autumn, when the fruits of the field had been gathered in. It is mentioned and described in Exod. xxiii, 16; Lev. xxiii, 34-36, 39, 43; Numbers xxix, 12-38; Deut. xvi, 13-15; xxxi, 10-13—where see notes. **Offered the daily burnt offerings by number**—Literally, *the burnt offering of day by day by number, according to precept, the matter of a day in its day*; that is, a strict observance

afterward *offered* the *continual burnt offering*, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the LORD. **6** From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the LORD. But *the foundation of the temple of the LORD was not yet laid.* **7** They gave money also unto the masons, and to the *carpenters*; and *meat*, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of *Joppa*, *according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.*

**8** Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua

*g* Exod. 29. 38; Num. 28. 3, 11, 19, 26; 29. 2, 8, 13.  
—*4* Heb. *the temple of the LORD was not yet founded.*—*5* Or, *workmen.*—*h* 1 Kings 5. 6, 9; 2 Chron. 2. 10; Acts 12. 20.—*i* 2 Chron. 2. 16; Acts 9. 36.—*k* Chap. 6. 3.

of the order prescribed in Num. xxix, 12–38.

**5. The continual burnt offering**—Described in Exod. xxix, 38–42; Num. xxviii, 3–8. **New moons**—See at Num. x, 10; xxviii, 11. **All the set feasts**—Enumerated in Num. xxviii and xxix. **A freewill offering**—That is, one *willingly offered* over and above what was prescribed in the law.

**7. They gave money also**—The feast of tabernacles was made also an occasion of contributing to the fund necessary to rebuild the temple. **Cedar trees from Lebanon**—The same kind of wood, from the same place Solomon had used in the first temple. 1 Kings v, 6, 9. **To the sea of Joppa**—Or, *to the sea at Joppa*. The transportation was to be done as in the time of Solomon. See note on 1 Kings v, 9. **According to the grant... of Cyrus**—All Syria and Phœnicia was subject to Cyrus, and this *grant* had doubtless been given to gratify the Jews in their desire to have the second temple built as nearly as possible after the manner of the first one.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE SECOND  
TEMPLE LAID, 8–13.

**8. The second year**—More than a year elapsed before the new communi-

the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; <sup>1</sup> and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the LORD. **9** Then stood <sup>2</sup> Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of <sup>3</sup> Judah, <sup>4</sup> together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. **10** And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, <sup>5</sup> they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the LORD, after the <sup>6</sup> ordinance of David king of Israel. **11** <sup>7</sup> And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; <sup>8</sup> a be-

*1* 1 Chron. 23. 24, 27.—*m* Chap. 2. 40.—*6* Or *Hodaviah*, chap. 2. 40.—*7* Heb. *as one.*—*n* 1 Chron. 16. 5, 6, 42.—*o* 1 Chron. 6. 31; 16. 4; 25. 1.—*p* Exod. 15. 21; 2 Chron. 7. 3; Neh. 12. 24.—*q* 1 Chron. 16. 34; Psal. 136. 1.

ty began. . . to set forward the work of the house of the LORD—Other things first required attention. The people were to be numbered, classified, and settled in new homes, and many had to build them houses. Much time also was necessary to arrange for the feasts and offerings, and also for bringing material from Lebanon.

**9. Jeshua . . . Kadmiel**—Levites mentioned in the list of the returned, chap. ii, 40. This *Jeshua* is not to be confounded with the high priest, the son of Jozadak, of the same name. **Sons of Judah**—Instead of *Judah*, we should probably read *Hodevah* (Neh. vii, 43) or *Hodaviah*, who is also mentioned in chap. ii, 40.

**10. To praise the Lord**—Not only in evidence of their joy and gratitude, but also to thrill the builders and all the people with inspiration and enthusiasm. **After the ordinance of David**—Literally, *at the hands of David*; that is, according to his direction or example in providing for appropriate temple services. See 1 Chron. vi, 31; xvi, 4; xxv, 1.

**11. Sang together by course**—All this is expressed by the single Hebrew word עָנָה, which means literally to answer. The sense is, as often

cause *he is good*,<sup>r</sup> for his mercy *endureth* for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. **12** <sup>s</sup>But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, *who were* ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, <sup>t</sup>wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: **13** So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of

joy from <sup>u</sup>the noise of weeping of the people: for the people <sup>v</sup>shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

## CHAPTER IV.

**N**OW when <sup>w</sup>the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that <sup>x</sup>the children of the captivity builded the temple unto the Lord God of Israel; **2** Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you: for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto

<sup>r</sup> 1 Chron. 16. 41; Jer. 33. 11. — <sup>s</sup> See Hag. 2. 3. — <sup>t</sup> Psa. 136. 6; Jer. 31. 8, 9. — <sup>u</sup> Judges 2. 5; Neh. 12. 43.

<sup>v</sup> Psalm 5. 11; Jeremiah 33. 11; Zechariah 4. 7. — <sup>w</sup> See verses 7-9. — <sup>x</sup> 1 Hebrew, *the sons of the transportation*.

where the word is used, that they sang antiphonally, one party saying, **The Lord... is good**, and the other responding, **For his mercy endureth for ever**. Comp. Exod. xv, 21; 1 Sam. xviii, 6. **A great shout**—Of triumph, hope, and joy.

**12. Ancient men, that had seen the first house**—So not a few of the returned exiles were the same persons whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried captive more than half a century before. **When the foundation of this house was laid**—The Masoretic accent, and most natural grammatical construction of the Hebrew text, would require us to render thus—*Had seen the first house when its foundation was laid*. But none of these *ancient men* could have been so old as to have witnessed the *laying* of the foundation of the first temple nearly five hundred years before, and hence some take יסד here in

the sense of *standing upon its foundation*. The word, however, has nowhere else such a meaning, and it seems therefore better to disregard the accent, and construe יסד with what follows, as is done in our common version. Literally, then, the Hebrew reads: *In its being founded—this house before their eyes*. Maurer refers the Hebrew suffix to Zerubbabel—*when he* (Zerubbabel) *laid the foundation of this house*; but as he is not mentioned in the context, it is better to translate the passage impersonally, and the common version can hardly be improved. **When the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes**—When they

witnessed the founding of this second temple the old men **wept with a loud voice** at the remembrance of the desolation of former glory, while others **shouted aloud for joy** in the strong hope and prospect of the restoration of former glory. Here, says Wordsworth, "is an apt emblem of every thing, however joyous, which is done in the Church militant on earth. Her march of victory is through a vale of tears; her restorations are memorials of sins which have caused the destruction of that which had been dissolved. Even when she celebrates the glories of the incarnation of Christ, who made our nature to be a temple of the Godhead, she may not forget to weep for the ruin into which the temple of that nature fell by sin."

## CHAPTER IV.

THE REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE SUSPENDED, 1-24.

**1. The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin**—The foreign population, who had been transported from various cities of Chaldaea and settled in the depopulated towns of Israel, especially the cities of Samaria. Compare verses 2, 9, 19, 17 with 2 Kings xvii, 24. The names of their principal leaders and counsellors are given in verses 7 and 8. **The children of the captivity**—Those who had gone into exile, and had returned again. Most of the returned had been born in exile.

**2. Let us build with you**—Did they honestly desire to unite with the Jews in rebuilding the temple, or was

him <sup>b</sup>since the days of Esar-haddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither. **3** But Zerubbabel, and Jeshua, and the rest of the chief of the fathers of Israel, said unto them, <sup>c</sup>Ye have nothing to do with us to build a house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build

unto the LORD God of Israel, as <sup>d</sup>king Cyrus the king of Persia hath commanded us. **4** Then <sup>e</sup>the people of the land weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building, **5** And hired counsellors against them, to frustrate their purpose, all

<sup>b</sup> 2 Kings 17. 24, 32, 33; 19. 37; verse 10.

<sup>c</sup> Neh. 2. 20. — <sup>d</sup> Chap. 1. 1-3. — <sup>e</sup> Chap. 3. 3.

this proposition made with evil design to provoke a quarrel, and find an occasion of hindering the work of the exiles? The context implies the latter. Already the hostile attitude of this foreign population had caused them fear, (chap. iii. 3,) and their subsequent opposition shows that they had no real friendship toward the Jews, and apparently only sought occasion to trouble and perplex them in their attempts to rebuild the temple of Jehovah. It is possible that some of the hostility was prompted by lingering elements of the old Israelitish enmity toward Judah, which may have been still represented by Israelites dwelling among these heathen colonists in the cities of Samaria. Such priests as had taught them to worship Jehovah (2 Kings xvii. 28, 32) may also have inspired them with sentiments of hostility toward the kingdom of Judah. **We seek your God**—They had been taught by Israelitish priests to fear Jehovah, but they also served their own idol gods. See note, 2 Kings xvii. 33. **Since the days of Esar-haddon**—The first colonists of the depopulated towns of Samaria were settled there by Sargon, (see note on 2 Kings xvii. 24,) but other colonists were also transported thither by later kings, as this verse shows. *Esar-haddon* was the son and successor of Sennacherib. On his accession to the throne of Assyria see note on 2 Kings xix. 37. He was the last Assyrian monarch whose name occurs in the Scriptures, and it was doubtless his captains who captured King Manasseh, and carried him to Babylon. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11-13. It is suggested by Rawlinson (*Ancient Mon.*, vol. ii, page 194) that this planting of foreign colonists in Samaria, in addition to what Sargon had previously done, was done

in connexion with the restoration of Manasseh to his kingdom. He hoped by that measure to strengthen the hold of Assyria upon Palestine. Esar-haddon reigned thirteen years, and was one of the most enterprising and powerful of the Assyrian kings. **Assur**—An incorrect form of anglicising the Hebrew word אַשּׁוּר, *Asshur*, or Assyria.

**3. Ye have nothing to do with us**—Literally, *It is not to you and to us to build*, etc., that is, ye have no proper right or claim to be associated with us in rebuilding the temple, for, as 2 Kings xvii. 41 shows, while these nations feared Jehovah, they still worshipped the graven images of their false gods, and so were really idolaters. The true Hebrew could not fellowship such worshippers of God.

**4. Weakened the hands of the people**—By throwing all possible difficulties in their way. We have no mention of the particular measures they took to *weaken and trouble* the Jews, except what is related in the sequel of their accusation against them before successive Persian kings.

**5. Hired counsellors against them**—This is to be understood of such men as Bishlam and his companions, (ver. 7,) who were commissioned and employed by the enemies of Judah to work with the officers of the Persian empire, and obtain their help to hinder the building of the temple. **To frustrate their purpose**—Namely, the *purpose* of the Jews to rebuild the house of God at Jerusalem. These *counsellors* probably prevailed on the governors of the neighbouring provinces to hinder the Jews from obtaining the material necessary for their work. This would greatly weaken and trouble the returned exiles, especially if the governor of Phœnicia had been prevailed

the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even

until the reign of Darius king of Per-

on to oppose their obtaining cedar wood from Lebanon. **All the days of Cyrus**—Who reigned, according to Herodotus, twenty-nine years. During his reign they obtained no reversal of his edict to have the temple rebuilt, but he was probably so much engaged in wars that the matter was left largely in the hands of the governors of the neighbouring provinces. **Until the reign of Darius**—In his second year, verse 24. This *Darius* was the son of Hystaspes, famous in Persian history for his assassination of Smerdis the Magian, who had usurped the throne of Cyrus, assuming to be Cyrus's son. See note on verse 24. Between *Cyrus* and this *Darius* two other kings reigned over Persia. The first was Cambyses, Cyrus's son, (the Ahasuerus of the next verse,) who succeeded his father, and reigned seven years. The other was Gomates, one of the Magi, who took advantage of Cambyses's absence to usurp the throne, and reigned seven months. So from the first year of Cyrus to the second of Darius was a period of thirty-eight years, during which hardly any thing was done towards rebuilding the temple except the laying of its foundation.

Verses 6-23. These verses are regarded by a number of recent critics as an interpolation, consisting of a document belonging to the times of Nehemiah and Artaxerxes Longimanus, when, it is assumed, the Jews made an attempt to rebuild the walls and city of Jerusalem, but were made to cease, as herein described. The arguments by which this position is maintained are ingenious and plausible, but by no means conclusive.

1. It is said that *Ahasuerus* (verse 6) is the Scripture name of Xerxes, who was the son and successor of Darius Hystaspes; and that *Artaxerxes* (ver. 7) is in this same book (chap. vii, 1) the name of Artaxerxes Longimanus, the son and successor of Xerxes. But it does not follow from this that Cambyses, and Smerdis the Magian, may not also have been known to the Jews under the names, respectively, of

Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes. 2. It is urged that nothing is said in this document about the *temple*, but the Jews are charged with rebuilding *the walls of the city*. Comp. verses 12, 13, 16. Now, as Nehemiah, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes Longimanus, is informed that the walls of Jerusalem are broken down, and the gates burned with fire, (Neh. i, 3,) it is assumed that in the earlier part of the reign of that king the Jews were rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, and were complained of in this letter to the king, and by his decree, as given in verses 21 and 22, the work was forcibly stopped, and the walls and gates, newly built, were again demolished. So this section, verses 6-23, belongs, chronologically, at the beginning of the Book of Nehemiah. But all this is at best a very doubtful hypothesis, and too easily set aside to be of any force. The fact that in this letter the enemies of the Jews do not mention the *temple*, but represent that the *walls of the city* are being rebuilt, is in perfect keeping with the inimical and crafty designs of those enemies. We naturally expect them to *misrepresent* the Jews before the king, and their letter contains just truth enough to blind the king, and prevent him from understanding all the facts in the case, for he would not be likely to inquire whether the Jews were building the foundations and walls of the *city*, or *only of the temple*. Further, it is hardly supposable that if Artaxerxes Longimanus had written the letter in verses 17-22, he would so soon afterwards have shown Ezra such favours and such authority as is recorded in chapter vii, favours of such a character as caused Ezra to class him among those who even helped to complete the temple. See note on chap. vi, 14. Nor would the same king have been likely, a few years later, to have commissioned Nehemiah to go and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. 3. It is also claimed by some that after the mention of Darius in verse 5, the writer goes forward to record the success of these enemies of Judah,

sia. **6** And in the reign of <sup>2</sup>Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they *unto him* an accusation against

2 Heb. *Ahashverosh*.

subsequent to the times of Darius. But, on the contrary, it is much more evident, both from the words of verse 5 and verse 24, that in verses 6-23 the writer describes what took place between the time of Cyrus and the second year of Darius. The emphatic statement of verse 24, "*Then ceased the work of the house of God,*" can only refer to the statement immediately preceding, that upon receiving the king's letter the enemies of Judah "went up in haste to Jerusalem... and made them to cease by force and power."

**6. Ahasuerus**—It is quite generally allowed that by this king we are to understand Cambyses, the son and successor of Cyrus. Some, indeed, have sought to identify him with Xerxes, the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther, but that hypothesis is utterly incompatible with the order of time evidently followed in this book. How Cambyses came to be called *Ahasuerus* by our author may not be now decided, but the difference in the names is not in itself sufficient to disprove the identity of the persons, and the son of Cyrus may have borne both these names. It appears that Smerdis was known by various names. See note on verse 7. And the writer of Esther (chap. i, 1) is careful to define the Ahasuerus of his book, assuming that there was more than one Ahasuerus known to his readers. Cambyses is represented in all accounts that remain of him as one of the most passionate and tyrannical of kings. He early assassinated his brother Smerdis, being jealous of him as a rival. He is said to have married his own sisters, and to have brutally killed one of them in a fit of madness. He invaded and conquered Egypt, and this was the great deed of his reign. While absent upon this expedition he learned, according to Herodotus, that Smerdis the Magian had usurped his throne, and in his haste to mount his horse

the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem. **7** And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote <sup>3</sup>Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel,

3 Or, *in peace*.

and return home to punish the impious pretender his sword accidentally struck his thigh, and he died soon after from the wound. So the Magian continued for a time in peaceable possession of the empire. **An accusation**—שְׂטָנָה. This Hebrew word is the feminine form of the name of *Satan*, (שָׂטָן) the arch-adversary and accuser of mankind. This accusation against the Jews seems not to have accomplished any thing of note with this king of Persia; at least no result of it is recorded.

**7. Artaxerxes**—This king is to be identified with Smerdis the Magian, who, in the absence of Cambyses from the capital, and perhaps instigated by the reports of the king's many tyrannical and brutal deeds, gave out that he was Smerdis the son of Cyrus, and took possession of the kingdom. He is called Gaumata in the Behistun inscription; *Tanyoxares* by Xenophon and Ctesias; and *Oropastes* by Justinus. Ewald thinks this latter name should be written *Ortosastes*, which would closely resemble Artaxerxes. This variety of names shows that no conclusive argument can be made against identifying Ahasuerus with Cambyses, (verse 6,) or Artaxerxes with Smerdis, solely from the difference in their names. The usurpation of the Magian seems to have been connected with an effort to overthrow the Zoroastrian religion in the Persian empire, and establish Magianism in its place. The Behistun inscription says that Smerdis destroyed the temples of worship in the land. But the usurper was assassinated after a reign of seven months, and Darius Hystaspes gained the throne, and restored the ancient religion of Ormazd. Rawlinson calls attention to the fact "that the only Persian king who is said to have interrupted the building of the temple is that Magian monarch, the pseudo-Smerdis, who was opposed to the pure Persian religion, and would

and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the writing of the letter was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syr-

4 Heb. *societies.*

therefore have been likely to reverse the religious policy of his predecessors. The Samaritans weakened the hands of Judah, and troubled them during the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses; but it was not till the letter of the pseudo-Smerdis was received that the work of the house of God ceased. The same prince, that is, who is stated in the inscriptions to have changed the religion of Persia, appears in Ezra as the opponent of a religious work which Cyrus had encouraged, and Cambyses had allowed to be carried on."—*Hist. Ev.*, p. 148. **Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel**—These, with the rest of their companions, were the "counsellors" (verse 5) whom the Samaritans hired to work with the Persian officers named in the next verse. They were probably persons that stood high in the community, possibly holding offices of some kind among the nations mentioned in verse 9. These counsellors wrote the document which follows, (verses 8–16,) that is, they drew up or prepared the letter for the Persian officers to sign and send unto Artaxerxes king of Persia. From the statement which follows, that the epistle was written in the Syrian tongue, and interpreted in the Syrian tongue, we may infer that these counsellors first prepared it in a Palestinean dialect, that was commonly spoken among the colonists of Samaria, and the Persian officers mentioned in the next verse translated it into Syriac or Aramæan. The Syrian tongue here mentioned, and of which the following letter is a specimen, was the language current at the time of this writing in Syria, Mesopotamia, and Chaldea, and is more properly called Aramæan, (אַרְמִית). It is commonly called Chaldee, and often distinguished from the Western-Aramæan, or more modern Syriac, and was the language of Babylonia at the time of the exile. During their exile the Jews acquired this

ian tongue. ■ Rehum the chancellor and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king in this sort: 9 Then wrote Re-

5 Or, *secretary.*

language, and gradually lost the use of the ancient Hebrew, so that upon their return they transplanted this language to Palestine, and subsequently used it as their common tongue. The mass of the people who returned from exile were not able to understand the language in which the law was written, but required to have it explained to them, Neh. viii, 8; and for the same reason the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases of the Hebrew Scriptures, were written. There seems to be a sort of confusion and tautology in the statement that it was "written...and interpreted" in this Aramæan language. The words are usually explained as meaning that the writing was both in the Aramæan characters and also in the Aramæan language. But the Hebrew word for interpreted is מִתְּרָגְּמָם, and properly means translated. From the same root comes the word Targum, the common name of the Chaldee translations of the Old Testament. So the apparently superfluous addition, translated into Aramæan, is, perhaps, best explained as a repetition designed to emphasize the fact that the epistle was not originally drawn up in Aramæan, but translated into that language before it was sent to the king. Hence it is seen how Bishlam and his companions wrote the letter which it seems the chancellor and scribe also wrote. The former wrote it in their common dialect, the latter translated it into Aramæan.

8. The chancellor—Hebrew, *Lord of counsel*, that is, a royal counsellor. He seems to have been the Persian governor and judge of the district of Samaria, and of the colonists mentioned in the next verse. The Sept. and Vulg. take the word as a proper name—Baallam. The scribe—Probably the secretary of the governor, or chancellor, and the one who translated this letter against Jerusalem into the Aramæan language. In this

hum the chancellor, and Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions; 'the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the Apharsites, the Archevites, the Babylonians, the Susanchites, the Dehavites, and the Elamites, 10 "And the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Asnapper brought over, and set in the cities

of Samaria, and the rest *that are on this side the river,* <sup>a</sup> and <sup>7</sup> at such a time. 11 This *is* the copy of the letter that they sent unto him, *even* unto Artaxerxes the king; Thy servants the men on this side the river, and at such a time. 12 Be it known unto the king, that the Jews which came up from thee to us are come unto Jerusalem, building

6 Chald. *societies*.—f 2 Kin. 17. 30, 31.—g Ver. 1.

**sort**—The two following verses (9–10) are to be regarded, not as an exact transcript, but a running paraphrase, giving the sentiment and general form of expression at the beginning of the letter. The introduction to the letter was *in this sort, or after this manner*. Hence the repetition in verse 11, after which follows what we may regard as an exact copy.

9. Of the names here given to the colonists according to the various cities or provinces of the Assyrian empire, the **Dinaites**, **Apharsathchites**, **Tarpelites**, and **Apharsites** are otherwise unknown. The various conjectures as to their origin are not worth recording. The **Archevites** were, perhaps, from the Babylonian city *Erech*. Gen. x, 10. The **Babylonians** were undoubtedly either from the city or province of Babylon. Compare 2 Kings xvii, 24. The **Susanchites** were evidently from *Susa* or *Shushan*, which became the metropolis of the Persian empire, (Neh. i, 1; Esth. i, 2,) but was originally the capital of the land of Elam. The **Dehavites** are generally thought to be identical with the *Davi* or *Dahi* of Herodotus, Strabo, and other classic writers, a Persian nomadic tribe, "whose name," says Rawlinson, (*Herod.*, i, p. 338,) "is equivalent to the Latin '*Rustici*,' and who were spread over the whole country from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf and the Tigris." The **Elamites** were natives of the province of which Shushan was the capital, (Dan. viii, 2,) and which was originally settled by the descendants of Shem. Gen. x, 22.

10. The great and noble **Asnapper**—Some have supposed that *Asnapper* is another name, or another form of the name, of Shalmanezar, or

h So vers. 11, 17; chap. 7. 12.—7 Chald. *Cheoneth*.

of Esar-haddon, and such a supposition is especially plausible here, as the name occurs in a document written in a different language, in which the form of the name might suffer change. But it is, perhaps, better to understand the name as the title of the Assyrian general or satrap by whom these nations were brought over and settled in Samaria. Thus it was Esar-haddon's "captains" that carried Manasseh to Babylon. 2 Chron. xxxiii, 11. To such an officer these nations would naturally apply the epithets *great and noble*. On this side the river—Better, *beyond the river*, that is Euphrates. The writer employs the *usus loquendi* of the Persians, who would speak of the country west of the Euphrates as *beyond the river*. Fürst renders it, *the (western) bank district of the river*. Syria and Palestine probably formed one satrapy under the Persian kings, and was under the charge of one governor. Compare chap. v, 3, note. And at such a

time—Chald. וְכַעֲתָּהּ, and so forth; compare verses 11 and 17, and vñi, 12: a sort of abbreviation where certain items or forms of statement are assumed to be understood, and, therefore, not expressed, but simply indicated. Hence it indicates not the date of the letter, but the omission of certain formularies of introduction, and is equivalent to our *et cetera*—and so forth.

11. This is the copy—After this verse (verses 12–16) we seem to have an exact transcript of the substance of the letter that they sent. What precedes in verses 9 and 10 was a sort of paraphrase of the introduction to the letter. See note on verse 8.

12. The Jews—This name came to be the common appellation of all Israelites after the exile. It was, doubt-

the rebellious and the bad city, and have <sup>8</sup>set up the walls *thereof*, and <sup>9</sup>joined the foundations. **13** Be it known now unto the king, that, if this city be builded, and the wall set up *again*, *then* will they not <sup>10</sup>pay <sup>1</sup>toll, tribute, and custom, and so thou shalt endamage the <sup>11</sup>revenue of the kings. **14** Now because <sup>12</sup>we have maintenance from *the king's palace*, and it was not meet for *us* to see the king's dishonour, therefore have we sent and certified the king; **15** That search may be made in the book of the records of thy fathers: so shalt thou find in the book of the rec-

ords, and know that this city *is* a rebellious city, and hurtful unto kings and provinces, and that they have <sup>13</sup>moved sedition <sup>14</sup>within the same of old time: for which cause was this city destroyed. **16** We certify the king that, if this city be builded *again*, and the walls thereof set up, by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river. **17** *Then* sent the king an answer unto Rehum the chancellor, and to Shimshai the scribe, and to the rest of their <sup>15</sup>companions that dwell in Samaria, and *unto* the rest beyond the river, Peace, and at such a time. **18** The letter which ye sent unto

8 Or, *finished*.—9 Chald. *sowed together*.  
—10 Chald. *give*.—i Chap. 7. 24.—11 Or, *strength*.

12 Chald. *we are salted with the salt of the palace*.—13 Chald. *made*.—14 Chald. *in the midst thereof*.—15 Chald. *societies*.

less, due to the permanence of the kingdom of Judah long after the northern kingdom of Israel had ceased, and to the fact that by far the greater portion of the exiles who returned were of the tribe and kingdom of Judah. **The rebellious and the bad city**—"In their craftiness they do not mention the temple which the Jews were building, and which Cyrus had encouraged them to build, but they mention the city, which they were not building."—*Wordsworth*. **Set up the walls**—It was perfectly in keeping with the character of these enemies of the Jews to misrepresent their work in this way. The exiles had received a royal charter permitting them to rebuild the temple, but not to rebuild the walls of the city. By confounding the two things these crafty Samaritans make out a damaging case against the Jews.

**13. Toll, tribute, and custom**—Comprising all kinds of revenue. It is difficult to decide the precise import of each term. Following the etymology of the original words used, we may say that *toll* (מנרה) denotes some tax or portion *measured out*, an *assessment*; probably a poll tax. *Tribute* (בלי) comes from a root which signifies to *consume*, to *use up*. Hence Fürst defines it as a *tax on articles consumed*; *excise*. *Custom* (הלך) from the root which means to *walk*, or *travel*, may denote a sort of *road tax* or *toll* levied on travellers or caravans who passed over the public roads.

**14. We have maintenance from**

**the king's palace**—Omit the interpolation, *kings*, of the translators. This version gives the sense, but the margin gives the Chaldee more correctly: *We are salted with the salt of the palace*. To take or eat one's salt is a common saying among many nations for receiving one's living from another. Our word *salary* comes from the Latin word for *salt*, (*sal*), and arose from the custom of paying Roman soldiers in salt. These Samaritans profess great zeal for the king, inasmuch as they obtained their living from him.

**15. Book of the records**—Public and official annals of the kingdom, and of the acts of its kings, prepared by the scribes and recorders, and deposited for reference and use among the archives of the nation. See Introduction to the Books of Kings, (chapter on the sources.) **Of thy fathers**—This word is here used of the king's predecessors on the throne—records of previous kings and dynasties that had held dominion over all Western Asia. These records contained accounts of the rebellions in different provinces of the empire, and of the efforts that had been made to suppress them; and prominent among them must have been the rebellions and wars of Judah and Jerusalem—the causes of their exile.

**17. An answer**—The original word (פתנים) conveys the idea not only of an *answer*, but also of a *decree*: an *edict*. **Peace, and at such a time**—Rather, *peace, and so forth*. This

us hath been plainly read before me. **19** And <sup>16</sup>I commanded, and search hath been made, and it is found that this city of old time hath <sup>17</sup>made insurrection against kings, and *that* rebellion and sedition have been made therein. **20** There have been mighty kings also over Jerusalem, which have <sup>18</sup>ruled over all *countries* <sup>1</sup>beyond the river; and toll, tribute, and custom, was paid unto them. **21** <sup>18</sup>Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease, and that this city be not builded, until an-

*other* commandment shall be given from me. **22** Take heed now that ye fail not to do this: <sup>19</sup>why should damage grow to the hurt of the kings? **23** Now when the copy of king Artaxerxes' letter *was* read before Rehum, and Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem unto the Jews, and made them to cease <sup>20</sup>by force and power. **24** Then ceased the work of the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem. So it ceased unto the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

<sup>16</sup> Chald. *by me a decree is set.*—<sup>17</sup> Chald. *lifted up itself.*—*k* 1 Kings 4. 21; 2 Chron. 9. 26; Psa. 72. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Gen. 15. 13; Josh. 1. 4.—<sup>18</sup> Chald. *Make a decree.*—*m* Verse 13; Esth. 3. 8, 9; 7. 3, 4.—<sup>19</sup> Chald. *by arm and power.*

expression denotes that the customary formularies of introduction are omitted. See note on verse 11.

**20. Mighty kings also over Jerusalem**—Reference is especially to Solomon, who reigned over all kingdoms between Egypt and the Euphrates, and received tribute from them. 1 Kings iv, 21. David's conquests had also extended to the Euphrates. 2 Sam. viii, 3. **Toll, tribute, and custom**—See on verse 13.

**23. Went up in haste**—The haste was the more necessary that the Jews might have no opportunity to learn and expose their misrepresentations of their work. Had they had an opportunity to show that they were building not the city but the temple, the Samaritans might not have been so successful with the king. **By force and power**—Literally, *by arm and might*, that is, by sheer violence. They forced them to cease work.

**24. Then ceased**—That is, as the evident connexion with the preceding section shows, when these enemies, by authority from the king, forcibly obliged them to stop work on the temple. This verse shows that the Artaxerxes of verse 23 cannot be the same as the one mentioned chap. vi, 14, and vii, 1, but is a king who preceded Darius. **Unto the second year of... Darius**—Artaxerxes, the pseudo-Smerdis, who issued the edict for the work to cease, was assassinated in less than a year after he began to reign, and Darius Hystaspes immediately took the kingdom, so that the work of rebuilding was not made to cease for more

than two years, probably not much more than one. See on chap. v, 16. This *Darius* was the son of Hystaspes, and a descendant of the ancient Achæmenian kings. On the death of Cambyses, who died without issue, he was probably the hereditary heir to the throne, and this fact may have had much to do with his daring efforts to slay the Magian usurper. Having obtained the kingdom he instituted a general slaughter of the Magi, apparently aiming at their extermination. He restored the Zoroastrian temples and worship, which the Magian had attempted to destroy, and it was therefore very natural that he should revoke the edict which had caused the rebuilding of the Jewish temple to cease. His genealogy, and the principal acts of the first four years of his reign, are recorded in the celebrated Behistun inscription on the rocks of western Persia. Under him began those great struggles with the West which finally ended in the fall of the Persian empire before the arms of Alexander. "Darius Hystaspes was, next to Cyrus, the greatest of the Persian kings, and he was even superior to Cyrus in some particulars. To him, and him alone, the empire owed its organization. He was a skillful administrator, a good financier, and a wise and far-seeking ruler. Of all the Persian princes he is the only one who can be called 'many sided.' He was organizer, general, statesman, administrator, builder, patron of art and literature, all in one. Without him Persia would probably have sunk as rapidly as she rose, and

## CHAPTER V.

**T**HEN the prophets, <sup>a</sup>Haggai the prophet, and <sup>b</sup>Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophesied unto the Jews that were in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, *even* unto them. **2** Then rose up <sup>c</sup>Zerubbabel the

*a* Haggai 1. 1.—*b* Zech. 1. 1.

would be known to us only as one of the many meteor powers which have shot athwart the horizon of the East."

--RAWLINSON, *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. ii, p. 445.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE RESUMED, 1, 2.

**1. Haggai...Zechariah**—These prophets were contemporary, and both were probably among those exiles who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel. Prophecies of both of them are extant in the books which bear their names among the minor prophets. It is noticeable that while both are called prophets, yet *Haggai* is emphatically the prophet, and *Zechariah* is called here, and at chap. vi, 14, the son of Iddo. In the book of his prophecy Zechariah calls himself "the son of Barachiah, the son of Iddo," from which it appears that *Iddo* was his grandfather rather than his father. The word *son* is, therefore, to be understood here, as often elsewhere, in the sense of descendant, either grandson or great grandson. The prophet naturally mentions his own father, but the historian, perhaps because Barachiah had died early, or was little known, calls Zechariah the son of Iddo, who was well known as one of the priests who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel. Neh. xii. 4, 16. And as this prophet was of priestly origin, it may be that he is designated by his grandfather's name rather than his prophetic office to enhance his influence and authority among the Jews. Here would seem to be prophet and priest combined, to rouse and inspire the Jews to action. **Unto them**—Rather, *upon them*; that is, upon these prophets. **The name of the God of Israel** was upon these prophets, inas-

son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and began to build the house of God which is at Jerusalem: and with them were the prophets of God helping them.

**3** At the same time came to them <sup>d</sup>Tatnai, governor on this side the river,

*c* Chap. 3. 2.—*d* Verse 6; chap. 6. 6.

much as they spake by Divine inspiration and authority. Compare Jer. xv, 16.

**2. Then rose up**—It seems from Hag. i, 2, that the people had become discouraged at the opposition they met in rebuilding the temple, and after being hindered by royal authority, they concluded that the time for rebuilding the Lord's house had not yet come. But when the Magian usurper was deposed, and Darius began to restore the Zoroastrian temples and worship, of which he speaks in his great Behistun inscription, the prophets discerned that things had changed, and the people should feel encouraged to resume their work again. **The prophets...helping them**—Urging and inspiring them to action by such exhortations and appeals as are found in the first chapter of Haggai.

## INTERFERENCE OF TATNAI THE GOVERNOR, 3-17.

**3. Tatnai**—Probably the successor of Rehum "the chancellor." Chapter iv, 8. **Governor on this side the river**—Literally, *Governor of beyond the river*. Compare note on chapter iv, 10, and on *beyond Jordan* at Joshua i, 14. The country *beyond the river* in the Persian *usus loquendi* comprised especially Syria and Palestine, and seems to have been one of the satrapies of the Persian empire. According to Herodotus (iii, 89) Darius Hystaspes "established twenty governments of the kind which the Persians call *satrapies*, assigning to each its governor, and fixing the tribute which was to be paid him by the several nations. And generally he joined together in one satrapy the nations that were neighbours, but sometimes he passed over the nearer tribes, and put in their stead those that were more remote." *Tatnai* seems to have been the gov-

and Shethar-boznai, and their companions, and said thus unto them, <sup>e</sup> Who hath commanded you to build this house, and to make up this wall? **4** Then said we unto them after this manner, What are the names of the men <sup>1</sup> that make this building? **5** But <sup>2</sup> the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, that they could not cause them to cease, till the matter came to Darius: and then they returned <sup>3</sup> answer by letter concerning this *matter*. **6** The copy of the letter that Tatnai, governor on this side the river, and Shethar-boznai, <sup>4</sup> and his companions the Apharsachites, which *were* on this side the river, sent unto Darius the king: **7** They sent a letter unto him, <sup>5</sup> wherein was written thus; Unto Darius the king, all peace. **8** Be it known unto the king, that we went into the province of Judea, to the house of the great God, which is builded with <sup>6</sup> great stones, and timber is laid in the walls, and this work goeth fast on, and prospereth in their hands.

<sup>e</sup> Verse 9. — <sup>f</sup> Verse 10. — <sup>1</sup> Chald. *that build this building*? — <sup>a</sup> Chap. 7. 6, 28; Psa. 33. 18. — <sup>h</sup> Chap. 6. 6. — <sup>4</sup> Chap. 4. 9. — <sup>2</sup> Chald. *in the midst whereof*. — <sup>3</sup> Chald. *stones of roll-*

*ernor* of one of the subdivisions of the satrapy west of the Euphrates, commonly called *beyond the river*, as above described. The Hebrew word for gov-

ernor is פֶּחָה, *pechah*, a term of Persian origin, and kindred to the Sanscrit *paksha* and Turkish *pasha*. See note on 2 Kings xviii, 24. **Shethar-boznai**—He was probably the secretary or scribe of Tatnai, sustaining to him the same relation that Shimshai did to Rehun. Chap. iv, 8. **Their companions**—Compare chap. iv, 9.

**4. Then said we**—The elders of the Jews. From the use of the first person here, it is evident that this account was written by an eye-witness. **What are the names of the men**—Not to be taken interrogatively, but thus, *what the names of the men were*. Literally, *who they were*—*the names of the men*. The whole verse should be translated thus: *Then thus told we them who they were—the names of the men—who this building were building*.

**5. Could not cause them to cease**—Rather, *did not cause them to cease*. Tatnai and his companions had power to stop the work, but they waited till

**9** Then asked we those elders, *and* said unto them thus, <sup>k</sup> Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls? **10** We asked their names also, to certify thee, that we might write the names of the men that *were* the chief of them. **11** And thus they returned us answer, saying, <sup>l</sup> We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded <sup>m</sup> and set up. **12** But <sup>n</sup> after that our fathers had provoked the God of heaven unto wrath, he gave them into the hand of <sup>o</sup> Neuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, the Chaldean, who destroyed this house, and carried the people away into Babylon. **13** But in the first year of <sup>p</sup> Cyrus the king of Babylon, *the same* king Cyrus made a decree to build this house of God. **14** And <sup>q</sup> the vessels also of gold and silver of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took out of the temple that *was* in Jerusalem, and brought them into the tem-

*ing*. — <sup>k</sup> Vers. 3, 4. — <sup>l</sup> Josh. 24. 15; Psa. 119. 46; Daniel 3. 26; John 1. 9. — <sup>m</sup> 1 Kings 6. 1. — <sup>n</sup> 2 Chron. 36. 16, 17. — <sup>o</sup> 2 Kings 24. 2; 25. 8, 9, 11. — <sup>p</sup> Chap. 1. 1. — <sup>q</sup> Chap. 1. 7, 8; 6. 5.

they might hear from the king Darius.

**Till the matter came to Darius**—

Rather, *till the decree of Darius went forth*. **And then**—Upon the issuing of Darius's decree. **They returned answer by letter**—That is, Darius and his court officers in Persia returned answer. It is better to render the verb impersonally, *and then was answered the letter concerning this matter*. The letter concerning this *matter* is immediately added in vers. 6–17; the answer containing Darius's decree is given in chap. vi, 1–12.

**6. The Apharsachites**—This one tribe and class of the colonists are here put for all those mentioned in chap. iv, 9, just as the Hittites are apparently named for all the Canaanites in Josh. i, 4. See note there.

**7. Written thus**—“This official letter of the Persian governor is quite a model of exactness, moderation, and truth, and gives a very favourable idea of the administrative part of the Persian government.”—*Kitto*.

**13. Cyrus the king of Babylon**—So called because he ruled over Babylon as the principal province of his empire. Compare chap. vi, 22, note.

ple of Babylon, those did Cyrus the king take out of the temple of Babylon, and they were delivered unto one, whose name *was* Sheshbazzar, whom he had made <sup>4</sup>governor; **15** And said unto him, Take these vessels, go, carry them into the temple that *is* in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be builded in his place. **16** Then came the same Sheshbazzar, and <sup>5</sup>laid the foundation of the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem: and since that time even until now hath it been in building, and <sup>6</sup>yet it is not finished. **17** Now therefore, if *it seem* good to the king, "let there be search made in the king's treasure-house, which *is* there at Babylon, whether it be so, that a decree was made of Cyrus the

king to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send his pleasure to us concerning this matter.

## CHAPTER VI.

**T**HEN Darius the king made a decree, <sup>1</sup>and search was made in the house of the <sup>2</sup>rolls, where the treasures were <sup>3</sup>laid up in Babylon. **2** And there was found at <sup>4</sup>Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of the Medes, a roll, and therein *was* a record thus written: **3** In the first year of Cyrus the king, *the same* Cyrus the king made a decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem, Let the house be builded, <sup>5</sup>the place where they offered sacrifices, and let the foundations thereof be

<sup>r</sup> Hagzai 1. 14; 2. 2, 21.—<sup>4</sup> Or, *deputy*.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 3. 8, 10.—<sup>t</sup> Chap. 6. 15.—<sup>u</sup> Chap. 6. 1, 2.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 5. 17.

<sup>1</sup> Chald. *books*.—<sup>2</sup> Chald. *made to descend*.—<sup>3</sup> *Ecbatana*, or, *in a coffer*.—<sup>b</sup> Deut. 12. 5, 6; 2 Chron. 2. 6; Psa. 122. 4.

14. **Sheshbazzar**—See on chap. i, 8.

16. **Since that time even until now hath it been in building**—It seems that in some way the building had been going on all through those years of trouble, and the year or a little more that it had entirely ceased, after the order of the pseudo-Smerdis, (chap. iv, 24, note,) was not of sufficient importance to be noticed in this letter.

17. **The king's treasure-house**—Where important records would be carefully preserved. **There at Babylon**—Where the official documents of Cyrus were supposed to be still remaining. But they were found at Achmetha. Chap. vi, 2.

## CHAPTER VI.

## DARIUS'S LETTER AND DECREE, 1-12.

This whole passage (verses 1-12) may be regarded as a part of the *answer* (chap. v, 5, note) which was returned to the communication of Tatnai and his companions. Comp. verse 6. The king's letter may have contained more than is here given, but this was all that suited our historian's purpose.

1. **House of the rolls. . . in Babylon**

—Chaldee: *House of books*; the royal library, or chamber of manuscripts and archives attached to the palace in Babylon. Layard discovered at Nineveh a series of chambers, the floors of which were covered a foot or more deep with documents written in bricks

of baked clay. But it seems the desired document could not be found **in Babylon**. The archives of the empire had been transferred to Ecbatana. See next verse.

2. **Achmetha**—The Chaldee form of the Persian *Hagmatana* or *Hagmatan*, and the *Ecbatana* of the classical writers. Its site is usually identified with the modern Hamadan. Herodotus (i, 98) describes it as a great city, whose walls were built circle within circle, each wall out-topping the one beyond it by the height of its battlements. This was done by means of the conical hill on which the city was built. The circular walls were seven in number, and the royal palace and treasury were within the innermost wall. It was originally the capital of the Medes, and hence its location here noticed as **in the province of the Medes**, but it was subsequently made the summer residence of the Persian kings. Hither it would seem the royal records had been transferred for greater security. The Behistun inscription shows that Babylon revolted at the beginning of Darius's reign, but was soon reconquered, and that may have been the occasion of this transfer of the archives, and among them this celebrated *roll* containing Cyrus's decree for the restoration of the exiles, and the rebuilding of their temple. Perhaps, however, the record in question had never been deposited at Babylon,

strongly laid; the height thereof threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof threescore cubits; **4** *With three rows of great stones, and a row of new timber: and let the expenses be given out of the king's house:* **5** And also let *the golden and silver vessels of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took forth out of the temple which is at Jerusalem, and brought unto Babylon, be restored, and* *brought again unto the temple which is at Jerusalem, every one to his place, and place them in the house of God.* **6** *Now therefore, Tatnai, governor beyond the river, She-thar-boznai, and* *your companions the Apharsachites, which are beyond the river, be ye far from thence:* **7** Let the work of this house of God alone; let

*c* 1 Kings 6. 36.—*d* Chap. 1. 7, 8; 5. 14.—*4* Chald. *go.*—*e* Chap. 5. 3.—*5* Chald. *their societies.*—*6* Chald. *by me a decree is made.*

but placed originally among the archives kept at Achmetha.

**3. Be strongly laid**—Gesenius and Fürst render, *be erected, or set up.* **Height... breadth... threescore cubits**—These proportions differ from those of Solomon's temple, the height of which was thirty cubits, and its breadth twenty, while only its length was threescore, or sixty cubits. See 1 Kings vi, 2. But we need not suppose that this record of Cyrus contained the exact measures which were followed in the rebuilding of the temple. Even had he commanded that the building be made of this size, it does not follow that the Jews were careful to observe this part of his orders. Or it may be these numbers are faulty, having been taken down from the indistinct remembrance or careless copying of some Persian scribe, for this record has the appearance of being not a copy of Cyrus's proclamation to the Jews, but a document prepared by the royal scribe or recorder as a part of the chronicles or annals of Cyrus, to be deposited among the archives of the empire. At any rate, these numbers are not an authoritative guide to estimate the size of the second temple.

**4. With three rows of... stones**—There is no *with* in the Chaldee, and the passage has the appearance of a fragmentary excerpt. The language, however, reminds us of 1 Kings vi, 36,

the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God in his place. **8** Moreover *let me make a decree what ye shall do to the elders of these Jews for the building of this house of God: that of the king's goods, even of the tribute beyond the river, forthwith expenses be given unto these men, that they be not hindered.* **9** And that which they have need of, both young bullocks, and rams, and lambs, for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the appointment of the priests which *are* at Jerusalem, let it be given them day by day without fail: **10** *That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.*

*7* Chald. *made to cease.*—*f* Isa. 49. 23.—*g* Chapter 7. 23; Jeremiah 29. 7.—*8* Chaldee, *of rest.*—*h* 1 Timothy 2. 1, 2.

(see note there,) and may, perhaps, be best understood of the platform of the inner court, which, like that of the first temple, was to have three layers of stone and one of new timber.

**5. Vessels**—Compare chap. i, 7-11.

**6. Now therefore, Tatnai**—Here Darius turns from quoting the record of Cyrus, which forms a part of his letter in answer to the Samaritan governor's letter, (chap. v, 5, note,) and proceeds to prohibit all interference with the Jews or hindering of their work. **Be ye far from thence**—That is, far from Jerusalem. Meddle not at all with their work.

**10. Offer sacrifices of sweet savours**—Or, *offer sweet odours.* **The God of heaven**—The same respectful and devout Monotheism appears in this letter of Darius as in the proclamation of Cyrus. See note on chap. i, 2. It is interesting to find this same Darius, in his great inscription at Behistun, declaring, "The temples which the Magians had destroyed I rebuilt. The sacred offices of the state, both the religious chants and the worship, I restored to the people which the Magian had deprived them of." This, doubtless, refers to the state religion of the Persians, which Darius re-established in place of the Magianism which the usurper had sought to revive; but it shows how Darius, like Cyrus, would naturally have a sympathy for the re-

**11** Also I have made a decree, that whosoever shall alter this word, let timber be pulled down from his house, and being set up, <sup>a</sup>let him be hanged thereon; <sup>1</sup>and let his house be made a dunghill for this. **12** And the God that hath caused his <sup>k</sup>name to dwell there destroy all kings and people, that shall put to their hand to alter *and* to destroy this house of God which *is* at Jerusalem. I Darius have made a decree; let it be done with speed.

**13** Then Tatnai, governor on this side the river, Shethar-boznai, and their companions, according to that which Darius the king had sent, so they did speedily. **14** <sup>1</sup>And the elders of the Jews

<sup>9</sup> Chald. *let him be destroyed*.—<sup>d</sup> Dan. 2. 5; 3. 29.—<sup>k</sup> 1 Kings 9. 3.—<sup>l</sup> Chap. 5. 1, 2.  
—<sup>10</sup> Chald. *decree*.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 1. 1; 5. 13;

ligion of the Jews, and sustain the action of his great predecessor toward them. **Pray for the life of the king**—The Persian monarch anticipates, by more than five centuries, the exhortations of an apostle of Christ. Comp. 1 Tim. ii, 1, 2.

**11. Let him be hanged thereon**—Or, *fastened thereon*, that is, crucified, or impaled, a mode of execution common among many ancient nations. See note on Esther ii, 23. **Let his house be made a dunghill**—A proverbial saying, indicating that the houses were to be reduced to ruinous heaps, and made receptacles for all manner of filth.

**12. God...destroy all kings**—Compare the similar execrations in Darius's Behistun inscription, especially the following: "If seeing this tablet, and these images, thou injurest them, and preservest them not as long as my seed endures, may Ormazd be thy enemy, and mayest thou have no offspring, and whatever thou doest may Ormazd curse it for thee."

#### THE TEMPLE FINISHED AND DEDICATED, 13-18.

**14. Prospered through the prophesying of Haggai...and Zechariah**—The extant writings of these prophets give evidence that the Jews needed continual prompting and encouraging in their work, for they had been so long in building that many had become fainthearted and discouraged. **The**

builted, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they builded and finished *it*, according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the <sup>10</sup>commandment of <sup>m</sup>Cyrus, and <sup>n</sup>Darius, and <sup>o</sup>Artaxerxes king of Persia. **15** And this house was finished on the third day of the month Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king. **16** And the children of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of <sup>11</sup>the children of the captivity, kept <sup>p</sup>the dedication of this house of God with joy, **17** And <sup>q</sup>offered at the dedication of this house of God a hundred bullocks,

verse 3.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 4. 21.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 7. 1.—  
11 Chald. *the sons of the transportation*.—  
<sup>p</sup> 1 Kings 8. 63; 2 Chron. 7. 5.—<sup>q</sup> Chap. 8. 35.

**commandment of...God**—Given by the prophets. Compare Hag. i, 1, 12. **Commandment of Cyrus, and Darius, and Artaxerxes**—The mention of *Artaxerxes* is evidently a prolepsis here, for he can be no other than the Artaxerxes of chap. vii, 1, (compare verses 12, 21-27,) who is generally allowed to be identical with Artaxerxes Longimanus, the son and successor of Xerxes. But because he so greatly assisted Ezra in matters pertaining to the house of God, (vii, 21-27,) it was quite natural for the compiler of this book, who was doubtless Ezra himself, to mention him in this connexion.

**15. Month Adar**—The twelfth, or last month of the Jewish year. **Sixth year of...Darius**—Having been resumed in the second year of his reign, (chap. iv, 24,) the rebuilding, after that time, took four years.

**16. Kept the dedication...with joy**—It was surely an occasion for joy and thanksgiving, for it marked the close of a long and bitter period of calamity and dangers, of persecution and trouble. Like the vast assembly that had celebrated the dedication of the former house, nearly five hundred years before, they were "joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for Israel." 1 Kings viii, 66.

**17. A hundred bullocks**—Compare the far larger offering of Solomon at the dedication of the first temple

two hundred rams, four hundred lambs; and for a sin offering for all Israel, twelve he goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. **18** And they set the priests in their <sup>r</sup> divisions, and the Levites in their <sup>s</sup> courses, for the service of God, which *is* at Jerusalem; <sup>12</sup> as it is written in the book of Moses.

**19** And the children of the captivity kept the passover <sup>u</sup> upon the fourteenth day of the first month. **20** For the priests and the Levites were <sup>v</sup> purified together, all of them *were* pure, and

<sup>r</sup> 1 Chron. 24. 1. — <sup>s</sup> 1 Chron. 23. 6. — <sup>12</sup> Chald. according to the writing. — <sup>t</sup> Num. 3. 6; 8. 9. — <sup>u</sup> Exod. 12. 6. — <sup>v</sup> 2 Chr. 30. 15. — <sup>w</sup> 2 Chr.

1 Kings viii, 63. But the present offering was large and liberal, according to the circumstances of the worshippers. **According to the number of the tribes**—The chastisements of the exile had thoroughly subdued these Jews, and the Israelites that had returned with them, and now, at this feast of dedication, they seek to wipe out their ancient schism, making an atonement for it by a **sin offering**, and, by the offering of **twelve he goats**, present themselves before Jehovah as the representatives of all the tribes who had been one people and one nation at the dedication five hundred years before. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, (1, 4, 5,) that Judah and Israel should return together, going and weeping, and join themselves in a perpetual covenant.

**18. Priests in their divisions**—As described in 1 Chron. xxiv. **Levites in their courses**—As described in 1 Chron. xxiii. **As it is written in the book of Moses**—Especially in Num. iii, iv, and viii. See the note on chap. iii, 2.

THE PASSOVER OBSERVED, 19-22.

**19. The fourteenth day**—The day of old appointed for the killing of the paschal lamb. Exod. xii, 6. **The first month**—Nisan, which followed immediately after Adar. Compare verse 15. The year is not mentioned, but it was, doubtless, the very next month after the feast of dedication, which the writer had just described. As Israel improved the first opportunity after they entered Canaan to celebrate the

<sup>w</sup> killed the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. **21** And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the <sup>x</sup> filthiness of the heathen of the land, to seek the Lord God of Israel, did eat, **22** And kept the <sup>y</sup> feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the Lord had made them joyful, and <sup>z</sup> turned the heart <sup>a</sup> of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their

35. 11. — <sup>a</sup> Chap. 9. 11. — <sup>y</sup> Exod. 12. 15; 13. 6; 2 Chr. 30. 21; 35. 17. — <sup>z</sup> Prov. 21. 1. — <sup>a</sup> 2 Kin. 23. 29; 2 Chron. 33. 11; chap. 1. 1; verse 6, &c.

passover, (Josh. v, 10,) so now they do the same at the earliest opportunity after they have returned from exile and finished the house of God. Then the reproach of Egypt had just been rolled away, (Josh. v, 9,) now the reproach of Babylon had ceased.

**20. For**—This introduces the reason why they were able to celebrate the passover so soon after the dedication—they were not obliged to wait for the purifying of the priests and the Levites. **All of them were pure**—They had already attended to that matter: unlike the time when Hezekiah held the passover in the second month instead of the first, because the priests had not properly sanctified themselves by ceremonial ablutions, according to the law. See 2 Chron. xxix, 34; xxx, 2, 3, 15-18, and notes there.

**21. Such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen**—Blackslidden and apostate Israelites who had remained in the land when others went into exile, and had corrupted themselves by idolatry and by intermarriage with the heathen. Also, perhaps, some non-Israelitish dwellers in the land who had adopted the Jewish faith, and had become proselytes of the new community.

**22. Turned the heart of the king of Assyria**—The Persian monarch is here called *king of Assyria*, because he ruled over all the provinces that were comprised in the former Assyrian empire, and these provinces now constituted the greater part of the Persian empire. For the same or a simi-

hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

### CHAPTER VII.

**N**OW after these things, in the reign of <sup>a</sup>Artaxerxes king of Persia, <sup>b</sup>Ezra the son of Seraiah, the son of Aza-

<sup>a</sup> Neh. 2. 1.

lar reason, Cyrus is called in chap. v, 13, and Artaxerxes in Neh. xiii, 6, *king of Babylon*, whereas they also, like Darius, were kings of Persia. *The king of Assyria* may here be understood of both Cyrus and Darius, for they both took measures to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God. Both being adherents of the comparatively pure monotheism of the ancient Persians, they had a natural sympathy for the religious system of the Jews. Compare notes on chap. i, 2.

### SECTION SECOND.

### THE ACTS OF EZRA.

CHAPS. VII-X.

### CHAPTER VII.

**EZRA'S GOING UP TO JERUSALEM, 1-10.**

**1. After these things**—Fifty-seven years after the events narrated at the close of the last chapter. **In the reign of Artaxerxes**—In the seventh year of his reign, as appears from verses 7 and 8. So that between the sixth year of Darius Hystaspes, with which the last chapter closed, (vi, 15,) and the present date, fall the last thirty years of Darius, (for he reigned thirty-six years,) and the whole of Xerxes' reign of twenty years, and the first seven years of this *Artaxerxes*, who was the son and successor of Xerxes the Great, the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther. The *Artaxerxes* of this chapter and of the Book of Nehemiah is commonly known as Artaxerxes Longimanus. According to Ctesias, he was the youngest of three sons who survived Xerxes, and succeeded to the throne by assassinating his eldest brother, and taking advantage of the absence of the other, who was at the time satrap of Bactria. Troubles accompanied this irregular accession, and

riah, the son of Hilkiah, **2** The son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub, **3** The son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, **4** The son of Zerariah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, **5** The son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the

<sup>b</sup> 1 Chron. 6. 14.

rebellions broke out in various parts of the empire, and it occupied all the first years of his reign to restore peace to his vast dominions. From all we can gather outside the Scriptures as to the character of *Artaxerxes*, he seems to have been a weak and irresolute prince. He reigned forty years, a longer period than that of any previous Persian king. Nehemiah (v, 14; xiii, 6) mentions his *thirty-second* year, which fact serves to show that he cannot be identified with Xerxes, as some have proposed, since Xerxes reigned but twenty years. **Ezra**, the distinguished priest and scribe, whose acts are recorded in the four following chapters of this book, was born and reared in exile, but by assiduous study had made himself a profound student and most competent scribe in the law of Moses. Verses 6, 11. See notice of his character and life at the close of chap. x. **Son of Seraiah**—It is somewhat uncertain whether by this *Seraiah* we are to understand the immediate father of Ezra, or that distinguished ancestor who was chief priest at the destruction of the temple, and was slain by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah. 2 Kings xxv, 18-21. His son Jehozadak went into exile, (1 Chron vi, 15,) and, perhaps, had a son Seraiah, who was father of Ezra. It would be very natural, however, for Ezra, in here recording his genealogy, to pass over his immediate ancestors, as he certainly does omit the name of Jehozadak, and link himself at once to that ancestor with whom the acting priesthood at Jerusalem had been broken off. He aims in this record to give the main links of his ancestry back to Aaron, and a comparison with the record of his genealogy, given in 1 Chron vi, 3-15, will show that he has passed over several other names there registered.

son of Aaron the chief priest: **6** This Ezra went up from Babylon; and he *was* <sup>c</sup>a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given: and the king granted him all his request, <sup>d</sup>according to the hand of the Lord his God upon him. **7** <sup>e</sup>And there went up *some* of the children of Israel, and of the priests, and the Levites, and the singers, and the porters, and <sup>f</sup>the Nethinim, unto Jerusalem, in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king. **8** And he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king. **9** For upon the first day of the

first month <sup>1</sup>began he to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, <sup>h</sup>according to the good hand of his God upon him. **10** For Ezra had prepared his heart to <sup>i</sup>seek the law of the Lord, and to do *it*, and to <sup>k</sup>teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

**11** Now this *is* the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the scribe, *even* a scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of his statutes to Israel. **12** Artaxerxes, <sup>1</sup>king of kings, <sup>2</sup>unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of

<sup>c</sup> Verses 11, 12, 21. — <sup>d</sup> Verse 9; chap. 8. 22, 31. — <sup>e</sup> Chap. 8. 1. — <sup>f</sup> Chap. 8. 15, &c. — <sup>g</sup> Chap. 2. 43; 8. 20. — <sup>h</sup> Heb. *was the foundation of the going up*. — <sup>i</sup> Verse 6; Neh. 2. 8, 18.

<sup>j</sup> Psa. 119. 45. — <sup>k</sup> Verses 6, 25; Deut. 33. 10. Neh. 8. 1-8; Mal. 2. 7. — <sup>l</sup> Ezek. 26. 7; Dan. 2. 37. — <sup>2</sup> Or, *to Ezra the priest, a perfect scribe of the law of the God of heaven, peace, &c.*

**6. A ready scribe in the law of Moses**—Not merely skilled as a copyist, the lowest function of a scribe, but a man thoroughly versed in the history and meaning of the law. From the time of the exile the office of scribe obtained among the Jews a character and worth that it never had before. From being a sort of secretary to the king, (see note on 2 Sam. viii, 17,) he now came to be a professional student and expounder of the sacred books. The age of Ezra was a time when the exiles would be especially anxious to gather up and preserve the ancient laws, and all the sacred literature of their nation. The masses of the people had lost the use of the ancient language, and spoke the Aramaic. The times demanded a class of men competent to collect and transcribe the sacred books, and to explain what was difficult and obscure in them. Ezra seemed providentially raised up for this position and work, and, according to verse 10, "had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments." This ever after was the high office and work of the scribes in Israel, an order of men of which Ezra may be called the founder, and which superseded and took the place of the schools of the prophets (1 Sam. x, 5, note) of which Samuel was the founder. **All his request**—Ezra had probably asked the king for permission and authority to go up with a body of the

exiles to Jerusalem. Perhaps he also made request for the silver and gold and other gifts which the king ordered to be given to him. Verses 14-22. **According to the hand of the Lord . . . upon him**—According as it was evident from his abilities and devotion to the law of **his God**, that he was a divinely-chosen instrument for some important mission.

**7. There went up**—A list of the chief persons who accompanied Ezra to Jerusalem is given in chap. viii, 1-20. **Singers . . . porters . . . Nethinim**—Comp: chap. ii, 41-43, and the passages there referred to.

**8. The fifth month**—Ab, corresponding nearly with our August.

**9. First . . . fifth month**—So the journey occupied precisely four months—from April through July. But they tarried twelve days at the river of Ahava. Chap. viii, 15, 21, 31.

**10. Prepared his heart to seek the law**—Or, *set his heart to search the law*. It had been the great aim and purpose of his life to be a student and expounder of the law. And the sequel shows how God honoured his efforts.

**ARTAXERXES'S LETTER AND DECREE**, 11-26.

**12. King of kings**—See note on 2 Kings xviii, 19. **Unto Ezra**—So this decree was at the same time a letter of authority to Ezra. **Perfect peace**—The word *peace* is improperly supplied by our translators. It is bet-

the God of heaven, perfect *peace*,<sup>m</sup> and at such a time. **13** I make a decree, that all they of the people of Israel, and of his priests and Levites, in my realm, which are minded of their own freewill to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee. **14** Forasmuch as thou art sent<sup>o</sup> of the king, and of his<sup>n</sup> seven counsellors, to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of thy God which *is* in thine hand; **15** And to carry the silver and gold, which the king and his counsellors have freely offered unto the God of Israel, <sup>o</sup> whose habitation *is* in Jerusalem, **16** <sup>p</sup>And all

the silver and gold that thou canst find in all the province of Babylon, with the freewill offering of the people, and of the priests, <sup>q</sup> offering willingly for the house of their God which *is* in Jerusalem: **17** That thou mayest buy speedily with this money bullocks, rams, lambs, with their<sup>r</sup> meat offerings and their drink offerings, and <sup>s</sup> offer them upon the altar of the house of your God which *is* in Jerusalem. **18** And <sup>t</sup> whatsoever shall seem good to thee, and to thy brethren, to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, <sup>u</sup> that do after the will of your God. **19** The vessels also that are given thee

<sup>m</sup> Chap. 4. 10.—<sup>n</sup> 3 Chald. *from before the king*.—<sup>o</sup> Esth. 1. 14.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Chron. 6. 2; Psa. 135. 21.—<sup>q</sup> Chap. 8. 25.

<sup>q</sup> 1 Chron. 29. 6, 9.—<sup>r</sup> Numbers 15. 4-13.—<sup>s</sup> Deut. 12. 5, 11.—<sup>t</sup> 2 Kings 12. 15; 22. 7.—<sup>u</sup> Verse 26; Eph. 5. 17.

ter to take the word *perfect* as an epithet of Ezra, and construe it as an adjective relating to the previous word *scribe*. As a scribe of the law of the God of heaven Ezra was *perfect*; that is, thoroughly skilled and accomplished; perfectly versed in it. **And at such a time**—Rather, *and so forth*. See on chap. iv, 10.

**14. His seven counsellors**—Seven seems to have been a favourite and sacred number among the Persians as among the Jews. "Besides the royal family itself—or clan of the Achæmenidæ—there were six great houses which had a rank superior to that of all the other grandees. According to Herodotus these houses derived their special dignity from the accident that their heads had been fellow-conspirators with Darius Hystaspes, (*Herod.*, iii, 84;) but there is reason to suspect that the rank of the families was precedent to the conspiracy in question, certain families conspiring because they were great, and not becoming great because they conspired. At any rate, from the time of Darius I., there seem to have been *seven* great families, including that of the Achæmenidæ, whose chiefs had the privilege of free communication with the monarch, and from which he was legally bound to choose his legitimate wives. The chiefs appear to have been known as 'the seven princes,' or the 'seven counsellors,' of the king. Esth. i, 14. They sat next to him at public festivals; they were privileged to tender him their ad-

vice whenever they pleased, (*Herod.*, iii, 84, 118;) they recommended important measures of state, and were, in part, responsible for them; they could demand admission to the monarch's presence at any time, unless he were in the female apartments; they had precedence on all great occasions of ceremony, and enjoyed a rank altogether independent of office. Sometimes—perhaps most commonly—they held office; but they rather conferred a lustre on the position which they consented to fill, than derived any additional splendour from it."—RAWLINSON, *Ancient Monarchies*, vol. iii, p. 223. **To inquire concerning Judah**—It would seem that Ezra had received some intimation of irregularities among the Jews at Jerusalem, and of their ignorance and neglect of the law, and had asked authority from the king to go and *inquire* about the matter, and, if possible, rectify it. **In thine hand**—In thy possession. Compare verse 25, where the wisdom of God is spoken of as in the hand of Ezra.

**16. That thou canst find in all . . . Babylon**—That is, all that can be found in hands ready to contribute for the temple at Jerusalem—all that Ezra could collect in any part of Babylon.

**19. The vessels**—Gold and copper basins, and the like, which had been contributed by Persians or Israelites. Compare chap. viii, 25-27. The vessels mentioned in chap. i, 7 were those which had been taken from Jerusalem, and that act of Cyrus was a *restoration*

for the service of the house of thy God, *those* deliver thou before the <sup>v</sup>God of Jerusalem. **20** And whatsoever more shall be needful for the house of thy God, which thou shalt have occasion to bestow, bestow *it* out of the king's treasure-house. **21** And I, *even* I Artaxerxes the king, do make a decree to all the treasurers which *are* beyond the river, that whatsoever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the law of the God of heaven, shall require of you, it be done speedily. **22** Unto a hundred talents of silver, and to a hundred <sup>a</sup>measures of wheat, and to a hundred baths of wine, and to a hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing *how much*. **23** <sup>b</sup>Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven: for why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons? **24** Also we certify you, that, touching any of the priests and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinim, or ministers of this house of

God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll, tribute, or custom, upon them. **25** And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that *is* in thine hand, <sup>w</sup>set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that *are* beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and <sup>x</sup>teach ye them that know *them* not. **26** And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether *it be* unto death, or <sup>e</sup>to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

**27** <sup>y</sup>Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, <sup>z</sup>which hath put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem: **28** And <sup>a</sup>hath extended mercy unto me before the king, and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes. And I was strengthened as <sup>b</sup>the hand of the LORD my God *was* upon me, and I gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with me.

<sup>v</sup> 2 Chron. 32. 19; Jer. 3. 17.—<sup>a</sup> Chald. *cors*.—<sup>b</sup> Hebrew, *Whatsoever is of the decree*.—<sup>w</sup> Exod. 18. 21, 22; Deut. 16. 18.—<sup>x</sup> Verse 10;

2 Chr. 17. 7; Mal. 2. 7; Matt. 23. 2, 3.—<sup>e</sup> Chald. *to rooting out*.—<sup>y</sup> 1 Chron. 29. 10.—<sup>z</sup> Chap. 6. 22.—<sup>a</sup> Ch. 9. 9.—<sup>b</sup> Ch. 5.5; vers. 6,9; ch. 8.18.

of what belonged to the temple. But *the vessels* here mentioned were an additional contribution to the treasures of the temple, and were the gifts, chiefly, of the king and his counsellors.

**21. All the treasurers... beyond the river**—The Persian system of finance provided for a royal treasury in every province.

**22. A hundred talents of silver**—About one hundred and sixty-six thousand dollars. **A hundred measures of wheat**—Or a hundred *cors*, about one thousand one hundred bushels. **A hundred baths**—Nearly eight hundred and seventy-five gallons, or more than fifteen hogsheads. **Salt without prescribing**—"The enemies of God's Church had before said that they were salted with the salt of the palace, (iv, 14, margin,) but now the king's decree gives salt without measure to Ezra and his company."—*Wordsworth*.

**23. Why should there be wrath**—From this remark it may be naturally inferred that the king had been led by words of Ezra, or of some other Jew, to fear the *wrath* of God against him if he did not favour these exiles. Perhaps he had been led to regard the

troubles and rebellions that had recently taken place in his empire (see note on verse 1) as tokens of Divine anger against him. At any rate, he now seeks to avoid any further judgments of the kind by timely kindness toward the people of Jehovah.

**24. Toll, tribute, or custom**—See note on chap. iv, 13.

**25. Set magistrates and judges**—Hereby Ezra was commissioned with authority to appoint all officers of the State. The fact indicates that the new community at Jerusalem had fallen into great irregularities.

**26. Unto death... banishment... confiscation... imprisonment**—All modes of punishment which any highly civilized State may practice.

EZRA'S THANKSGIVING, 27, 28.

**27. Blessed be the Lord**—Ezra appropriately appends to the royal document his thanksgiving to God for the favour shown him and his people by the granting of the decree to **beautify the house of the Lord**. This utterance of praise is evidence of his profound piety and entire devotion to the service of God.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**T**HESE *are* now the chief of their fathers, and *this* is the genealogy of them that went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of Artaxerxes the king. **2** Of the sons of Phinehas; Gershom: of the sons of Ithamar; Daniel: of the sons of David; <sup>a</sup>Hattush. **3** Of the sons of Shechaniah, of the sons of <sup>b</sup>Pharosh; Zechariah: and with him were reckoned by genealogy of the males a hundred and fifty. **4** Of the sons of Pahath-moab; Elihoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males. **5** Of the sons of Shechaniah; the son of Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males. **6** Of the sons also of Adin; Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him

a 1 Chron. 3. 22.—b Chap. 2. 3.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## GENEALOGY OF EZRA'S COMPANIONS FROM BABYLON, 1-14.

**1. Chief of their fathers**—This is not a list of the names of Ezra's companions, nor even of all the elders or chief fathers among them, but rather a record of their **genealogy**, showing what ancient houses of Israel were represented, and designating them by the names of distinguished ancestors of the remote past.

**2. Phinehas**, the grandson, and **Ithamar**, the son of Aaron were represented by a body of descendants whose number is not here given, for **Gershom** and **Daniel** were evidently not the only priests that went up with Ezra. In verse 24 mention is made of twelve of the chief priests who were set apart to take charge of the vessels and other freewill offerings to be carried up to Jerusalem, and these priests must have been descendants of either **Phinehas** or **Ithamar**. Hence we understand that the **Gershom** and **Daniel** here named were representatives of these ancient priestly houses, and were accompanied by many others of the same genealogy. Possibly the number has fallen out of the text. It is here worthy of remark that, notwithstanding the curse pronounced on the house of Eli, (1 Sam. ii, 33-36,) descendants of Ithamar still remained.

**3. Of the sons of Shechaniah**—These words seem rather to belong to

fifty males. **7** And of the sons of Elam: Jeshaiiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males. **8** And of the sons of Shephatiah; Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him fourscore males. **9** Of the sons of Joab; Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males. **10** And of the sons of Shelomith; the son of Josiphiah, and with him a hundred and threescore males. **11** And of the sons of Bebai; Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty and eight males. **12** And of the sons of Azgad; Johanan <sup>1</sup> the son of Hakkatan, and with him a hundred and ten males. **13** And of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names *are* these, Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah, and with

1 Or, the youngest son.

the preceding verse, and to be connected with *Hattush*, a descendant of David. So we should read: *Of the sons of David, Hattush of the sons of Shechaniah*. Compare 1 Chron. iii, 22, where Shechaniah and Hattush are both mentioned as descendants of David. **Pharosh**—Probably the same as *Parosh*, chap. ii, 3. **Zechariah** is the first name in this list, which is immediately followed by the number of his father's house who were **with him** among Ezra's company.

**4. Pahath-moab**—Mentioned also in chap. ii, 6. So of a number of the families here named many members had previously returned to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel.

**5, 10.** In verse 5 the Septuagint inserts *Zattu* (chap. ii, 8) before **Shechaniah**, and in verse 10 *Bani* (ii, 10) before **Shelomith**. Compare, also, apocryphal 1 Esdras viii, 32, 34.

**13. The last sons of Adonikam**—Other sons, to the number of six hundred and sixty-six, went up with Zerubbabel, (chap. ii, 13,) and some think the **sons** here mentioned are called **the last** in reference to those who had previously accompanied Zerubbabel. But it is, perhaps, better to understand *the last sons* to be **Eliphelet, Jeiel, and Shemaiah**, who were the latest born immediate *sons of Adonikam*, and thus distinguished from other sons of fathers mentioned in the list, who were not immediate sons, but grandsons, or still more remote descendants.

them threescore males. **14** Of the sons also of Bigvai; Uthai, and <sup>2</sup>Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

**15** And I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava, and there <sup>3</sup>abode we in tents three days: and I viewed the people, and the priests, and found there none of the <sup>c</sup>sons of Levi. **16** Then sent I for Eliezer, for Ariel, for Shemaiah, and for Elnathan, and for Jarib, and for Elnathan, and for Nathan, and for Zechariah, and for Meshullam, chief men; also for Joiarib, and for Elnathan, men of understanding. **17** And I sent them with commandment unto Iddo the chief at the place Casiphia, and <sup>4</sup>I told them what they should say unto Iddo, and to his brethren

the Nethinim, at the place Casiphia, that they should bring unto us ministers for the house of our God. **18** And by the good hand of our God upon us they <sup>d</sup>brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, the son of Levi, the son of Israel; and Sherebiah, with his sons and his brethren, eighteen; **19** And Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiiah of the sons of Merari, his brethren and their sons, twenty; **20** <sup>e</sup>Also of the Nethinim, whom David and the princes had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinim: all of them were expressed by name. **21** Then I <sup>f</sup>proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might <sup>g</sup>afflict ourselves before our God,

<sup>2</sup> Or, *Zaccur*, as some read.—<sup>3</sup> Or, *pitched*.

<sup>c</sup> See chap. 7. 1.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *I put words in their mouth*; see 2 Sam. 14. 3, 19.

<sup>d</sup> Nehemiah 8. 7; 9. 4, 5.—<sup>e</sup> See chap. 2. 43.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Chronicles 20. 3.—<sup>g</sup> Leviticus 16. 29; 23. 29; Isaiah 58. 3, 5.

#### THE GATHERING AND PREPARATIONS AT THE RIVER THAT RUNNETH TO AHAVA, 15-20.

**15. The river that runneth to Ahava**—So that *Ahava* was not the name of the river, but the place to which or near which the river ran. It was probably the same as the *Ava* or *Ivah* of 2 Kings xvii, 24; xviii, 34; and the river is to be understood of the Euphrates at that spot, or, what is more probable, some canal or small stream that flowed into the Euphrates at that place. *Ahava*, or *Ava*, was situated in the northern part of Babylonia, and is represented by the modern *Hit*. See note on 2 Kings xvii, 24. **None of the sons of Levi**—That is, none of the Levites as distinguished from the priests. All the priests were sons of Levi, but all the sons of Levi were not priests. The priests were confined to the descendants of Aaron, (through Phinehas and Ithamar of verse 2.) The Levites proper were descendants of other sons of Levi. See the genealogy of 1 Chron. vi.

**16. Eliezer...Ariel...chief men**—These were principal men among Ezra's companions who had already assembled at Ahava, and whom he used as chief assistants. The nine first named are called *chief men*, probably from being the most distinguished and influential elders among them; the last two are distinguished as *men of*

*understanding*, being skilled, probably, in the law, as Ezra was, and competent to instruct the people.

**17. Iddo the chief**—This person was evidently the head man of a community of the Nethinim—descendants of the Gibeonites given to the service of the temple, (see 1 Chron. ix, 2,) who were dwelling at the place Casiphia. This place is now unknown, but seems, from the short time occupied in obtaining men from there, to have been not very far from Ahava.

**18. Mahli**—A Levite descended from Merari. 1 Chron. vi, 19. **And Sherebiah**—We understand this to be the name of that man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli, whom Ezra's delegation brought, though the English version seems to present him as another person. But render: *And Sherebiah and his sons and his brethren were eighteen*, and the meaning will be clearer. From this verse and the two following it appears that Ezra's men succeeded not only in obtaining Nethinim from Iddo to the number of two hundred and twenty, but also in enlisting in their company thirty-eight Levites, who could show their genealogy from distinguished ancestors.

**21. Proclaimed a fast**—That by proper humiliation before God they might secure his blessing upon their journey. **Afflict ourselves**—By abstinence and personal humiliation

to seek of him a <sup>b</sup> right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. **22** For <sup>1</sup> I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, <sup>k</sup> The hand of our God <sup>is</sup> upon all them for <sup>1</sup> good that seek him; but his power and his wrath <sup>is</sup> <sup>m</sup> against all them that <sup>n</sup> forsake him. **23** So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was <sup>o</sup> entreated of us. **24** Then I separated twelve of the chief of the priests, Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them,

<sup>h</sup> Psa. 5. 8.—<sup>i</sup> So 1 Cor. 9. 15.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 7. 6, 9, 23.—<sup>l</sup> Psa. 33. 18, 19; 34. 15, 22; Rom. 8. 28.—<sup>m</sup> Psa. 34. 16.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Chron. 15. 2.—<sup>o</sup> 1 Chron. 5. 20; 2 Chron. 33. 18; Isa. 19. 22.

Compare marginal references. **A right way for us**—A course of righteousness and safety. Great and pressing dangers beset this expedition of Ezra. There was danger that transgressors might appear among these exiles to covet the treasures that had been given for the temple, and so, like Achan, be a curse to the whole camp. They were also in danger of robbers and perils by the way.

**22. I was ashamed to require . . . soldiers**—As is immediately explained, Ezra's representations of the power and goodness of his God toward them that obey him made it appear inconsistent for him to ask the protection of human forces of the king. For it would expose him to the charge of being afraid to trust to the protection of the almighty Ruler, in whose name and honour he was undertaking this journey.

**24. Twelve of the chief of the priests**—Not *high priests*, but leading men, specially distinguished for age or wisdom, among the priests that were with Ezra. **Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten**—According to the English version, which follows the Sept. and Vulg., these were the *twelve priests* just mentioned; but from verses 18, 19, and elsewhere, it appears that *Sherebiah* and *Hashabiah* were not priests, but Levites. And as our author is so careful to distinguish between *priests* and *Levites* in verse 15, we can hardly suppose he confounds them here. The Hebrew literally reads: *I separated*

**25** And weighed unto them <sup>p</sup> the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, *even* the offering of the house of our God, which the king, and his counsellors, and his lords, and all Israel *there* present, had offered: **26** I even weighed unto their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, and silver vessels a hundred talents, *and* of gold a hundred talents; **27** Also twenty basins of gold, of a thousand drams; and two vessels of <sup>q</sup> fine copper, <sup>r</sup> precious as gold. **28** And I said unto them, Ye *are* <sup>s</sup> holy unto the Lord; the vessels *are* <sup>t</sup> holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a freewill

<sup>p</sup> Chapter 7. 15, 16.—<sup>q</sup> Hebrew, *yellow*, or, *shining brass*.—<sup>r</sup> 6 Hebrew, *desirable*.—<sup>s</sup> Leviticus 21. 6-8; Deuteronomy 33. 8.—<sup>t</sup> Leviticus 22. 2, 3; Numbers 4. 4, 15, 19, 20.

*from the chief of the priests twelve unto* (<sup>h</sup>) *Sherebiah*, etc. That is, he appointed twelve priests *in addition* to *Sherebiah*, *Hashabiah*, and their ten brethren, so that there were twenty-four persons in all to whom the treasures were intrusted—twelve priests and twelve Levites. Compare verse 30.

**25. Weighed unto them**—Took a careful inventory of all the offerings that had been given, and consigned them to their care, that it might be shown at Jerusalem that nothing had been lost or stolen by the way.

**26. Six hundred and fifty talents**—This amount of silver would be in weight about sixty-one thousand pounds avoirdupois, and in value over one million dollars. **A hundred talents**—In weight nine thousand four hundred pounds; in value one hundred and sixty-six thousand dollars. **Gold a hundred talents**—In weight eighteen thousand eight hundred pounds, and in value nearly five million six hundred and ninety thousand dollars.

**27. A thousand drams**—Worth about five thousand five hundred dollars. See on the word *dram*, or *daric*, at chap. ii, 69. **Fine copper**—Or, rather, *copper shining beautifully*. The value of all these treasures, according to the above estimate, must have been nearly seven million dollars, an amount so great as to lead us to suspect some corruption or error in the numbers.

**28. Ye are holy . . . vessels are holy**—Both had been set apart and

offering unto the Lord God of your fathers. **29** Watch ye, and keep them, until ye weigh *them* before the chief of the priests and the Levites, and chief of the fathers of Israel, at Jerusalem, in the chambers of the house of the Lord.

**30** So took the priests and the Levites the weight of the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, to bring *them* to Jerusalem unto the house of our God.

**31** Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go unto Jerusalem: and *the* hand of our God was upon us, and he delivered us from the hand of the enemy, and of such as lay in wait by the way. **32** And we *'*came to Jerusalem, and abode there three days. **33** Now on the fourth day was the silver and the gold and the vessels *'*weighed in the

s Chap. 7. 6, 9, 22. —t Neh. 2. 11. —u Verses

consecrated to holy services, so that holy treasures should be intrusted to holy persons.

**29. Watch ye, and keep them—**Treasures of such great value were in danger of being stolen. Hence the care to weigh them at the beginning and at the end of the journey.

**30. The priests and the Levites**—Twelve of each class. Ver. 24, note.

THE JOURNEY AND ARRIVAL AT JERUSALEM, 31-36.

**31. On the twelfth day—**They began to gather at Ahava on the first day, (chap. vii, 9,) but the fast and other events mentioned above (verses 15-30) occupied ten or eleven days. **The hand of our God was upon us—**Providence favoured us, and **delivered us** from all enemies and dangers.

**32. Abode there three days—**That is, three days before proceeding to deliver over their treasures and the king's letter. They seem to have taken this time for rest and deliberation before commencing their work. So Nehemiah waited three days before commencing his work. Neh. ii, 11.

**33. Meremoth...Eleazar...Jozabad...Noadiah—**Two priests and two Levites. These were the chief priests and Levites who, according to verse 29, were to receive the new treasures in the chambers of the temple at Jerusalem. They were not members

house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest; and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; and with them *was* Jozabad the son of Jeshua, and Noadiah the son of Binnui, Levites; **34** By number *and* by weight of every one: and all the weight was written at that time. **35** *Also* the children of those that had been carried away, which were come out of the captivity, *'*offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, twelve bullocks for all Israel, ninety and six rams, seventy and seven lambs, twelve he goats *for* a sin offering: all *this was* a burnt offering unto the Lord. **36** And they delivered the king's *'*commissions unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors on this side the river: and they furthered the people, and the house of God.

26, 30. —v So chap. 6. 17. —w Chap. 7. 21.

of Ezra's company, but persons who had previously gone up to Jerusalem.

**35. The children...which were come—**That is, these who had just now come up from Babylon with Ezra. **Twelve bullocks for all Israel—**See note on chap. vi, 17. "The idea of offerings for all Israel pervades the entire sacrifice, with the exception of the lambs, whose number (77) is peculiar, and has not been accounted for."—Rawlinson.

**36. Lieutenants—**Hebrew, *achash-darpenim*; satraps. "The genuine form of this name, which has lately been found in the inscriptions of ancient India, is *ksatrapa*, that is, warrior of the host."—Gesenius. In the Behistun inscription it is written *khshatrapava*. These were among the highest officers of the Persian government, and in their several provinces were representatives of the king. **Governors**, like Tatnai, (see note on chap. v, 3,) were rulers and superintendents of smaller districts under the satraps. **They furthered the people—**Literally, *lifted* them, or as we say, *gave them a lift*. They not only gave them no opposition, but even showed them favour, and helped them in their work. **And the house of God—**This had been finished and dedicated, (verses 15-17,) but doubtless needed still much in the way of beautifying and adorning.

## CHAPTER IX.

**N**OW when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not "separated themselves from the people of the lands," <sup>b</sup>doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. **2** For they have "taken

of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the "holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.

**3** And when I heard this thing, "I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down "astonished. **4** Then were assembled unto me every

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 6. 21; Neh. 9. 2.—<sup>b</sup> Deut. 12. 30, 31.  
<sup>c</sup> Exod. 34. 16; Deut. 7. 3; Neh. 13. 23.

<sup>d</sup> Exod. 19. 6; 22. 31; Deut. 7. 6; 14. 2.—<sup>e</sup> 2 Cor. 6. 14.—<sup>f</sup> Job 1. 20.—<sup>g</sup> Psa. 143. 4.

## CHAPTER IX.

ISRAEL'S SIN OF HEATHEN INTERMARRIAGE MADE KNOWN TO EZRA, 1-2.

**1. When these things were done**—Namely, the treasures delivered, the burnt offerings offered, and the king's commissions handed to the satraps and governors, as stated viii, 33-36. **The princes**—Certain distinguished and godly men among the chiefs of the new community at Jerusalem. Not all the princes came, for some were implicated in the trespass here confessed. Verse 2. **People...priests...Levites**—All classes were involved, even the ministers of the temple, who, above all, should have kept themselves pure. Nor were the rulers and princes clear, as the next verse shows. **Not separated themselves from the people of the lands**—*The people of the lands* are the idolatrous nations in and about Palestine, named in this verse. With these nations, which were not extinct, but abode still in large numbers in various parts of the country, the returned exiles had largely mixed themselves. At the passover, held immediately after the feast of dedication, (chap. vi, 19-22,) a number joined the new community from "such as had separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen of the land," (vi, 21,)—apparently Israelites who had not gone into exile, but, being left in the land, had intermarried with their heathen neighbours, and being without temple, priests, or worship, had gradually lost the knowledge and worship of Jehovah. These seem to have corrupted many of the Jews who had returned from exile, and during the

half century or more from that time until Ezra's arrival, this evil leaven had been spreading through the whole community. Not all the people were guilty, but the evil had affected all classes, and the commandments of the law forbidding intermarriage with these heathen nations (Exod. xxxiv, 12-16; Deut. vii, 1-3) seem to have been forgotten, or else utterly ignored by even the leaders of the people. **Their abominations**—Their idolatrous practices. On the strictly Canaanitish nations here mentioned, see note on Josh. iii, 10. The **Ammonites** and **Moabites**, whose country was east of the Jordan, had at different times long before this corrupted Israel with their abominations. Num xxv, 1; Judges x, 6. The wars between Persia and Egypt had, doubtless, brought many **Egyptians** into contact with the Jews, and from the time of Solomon's marriage with Pharaoh's daughter (1 Kings iii, 1) the Egyptians had mingled more or less with the Israelites.

**2. Holy seed**—Jehovah's chosen people. See marginal references. **Princes and rulers...chief in this trespass**—This was the most alarming fact of all. When the rulers transgress the law the people must needs become corrupt and demoralized.

EZRA'S GRIEF AND PRAYER, 3-15.

**3. I rent my garment and my mantle**—Both the inner and the outer clothing. This was a sign of most excessive grief. Job rent only his mantle, i, 20. Compare Josh. vii, 6. **Plucked off the hair**—Another sign of anguish and sorrow. Job *shaved* his head in his agony of grief. **Astonished**—

one that <sup>h</sup>trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the transgression of those that had been carried away; and I sat astonished until the <sup>i</sup>evening sacrifice. **5** And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my <sup>j</sup>heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and <sup>k</sup>spread out my hands unto the Lord my God, **6** And said, O my God, I am <sup>l</sup>ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for <sup>m</sup>our iniquities are increased over *our* head, and our <sup>n</sup>tres-

<sup>h</sup> Chap. 10. 3; Isa. 66. 2.—<sup>i</sup> Exod. 29. 39.—<sup>j</sup> 1 Or, *affliction*.—<sup>k</sup> Exod. 9. 29, 33.—<sup>l</sup> Dan. 9. 7, 8.—<sup>m</sup> Psa. 38. 4.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Or, *guiltiness*.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Chron. 28. 9; Rev. 18. 5.

Ezra **sat down**, amazed at the extent and fearfulness of his people's sin.

#### 4. Every one that trembled—

Ezra was not alone in grief and dismay over the sins of the people. Others with him realized the peril of the hour, and *trembled* with a profound sense of their danger. For should Divine vengeance burst upon the camp, the innocent and guilty would suffer together. Among those **that trembled at the words of the God of Israel** were also, doubtless, some of the transgressors who had been brought to realize their guilt and danger. **The evening sacrifice**—The law ordained that a lamb should be offered each day, morning and evening, and these offerings were called respectively the morning and evening sacrifices. See Exod. xxix, 38–41. Comp. also 1 Kings xviii, 29, note. While the people mingled with the heathen, and openly transgressed, they continued to sacrifice to Jehovah, thus apparently forgetting that obedience is better than sacrifice.

**5. Fell upon my knees**—The appropriate attitude of an agonizing suppliant. **Spread out my hands**—Thus further indicating his own helplessness, and his imploring condition of soul.

**6. O my God**—The following prayer of Ezra is, for its occasion, a most perfect model of intercessory supplication. Or rather, perhaps, we should say, it is a most perfect utterance of humiliation and confession before God, for there is no word of direct *supplication* here. Much is suggested and implied,

pass is <sup>o</sup>"grown up unto the heavens. **7** Since the days of our fathers *have* <sup>p</sup>*we been* in a great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities <sup>q</sup>*have* we our kings, *and* our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to a spoil, and to <sup>r</sup>*confusion of face*, as *it is* this day. **8** And now for a <sup>s</sup>little space grace hath been *showed* from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us <sup>t</sup>a nail in his holy place, that our God may <sup>u</sup>lighten our

<sup>o</sup> Psa. 106. 6; Dan. 9. 5, 6, 8.—<sup>p</sup> Deut. 28. 36, 64; Neh. 9. 30.—<sup>q</sup> Dan. 9. 7, 8.—<sup>r</sup> 2 Heb. *moment*.—<sup>s</sup> 4 Or, *a pin*; that is, *a constant and sure abode*. So Isa. 22. 23.—<sup>t</sup> Psa. 13. 3; 34. 5.

but every utterance is that of confession of past and present sin, and personal humiliation before God. Ezra enumerates the manifold sins of his nation in connexion with the manifold mercies of God, and confesses that all the woes and punishments of Israel have been less than their sins. He ventures not to pray for mercy and pardon, but presents the people in their trespasses before Jehovah, confessing that they are not able to stand. Compare Daniel's prayer, (Dan. ix. 4–19,) where is found much of direct supplication. **Our iniquities... over our head**—Like a flood they have been rising higher and higher, until we are quite submerged and overwhelmed. **Grown up unto the heavens**—Like a tower of Babel, which has been built higher and higher, as if to defy the very God of heaven.

**7. Sword... captivity... spoil**—Bitterly true, as the very stones of Jerusalem might testify. **Confusion of face**—Having nothing to answer to vindicate themselves, for their own sins had brought them thus low.

**8. Now for a little space**—From the time of Cyrus. Yet in that short time not a few sorrows had befallen them. **Give us a nail in his holy place**—The Hebrew for *nail* means a *tent-pin*, and is here used metaphorically for pitching one's tent and abiding in a place. So these exiles had been permitted to return and settle in and about the holy city. **Lighten our eyes**—Make them shine and sparkle with hope of returning good.

eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. **9** For we *were* bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but <sup>u</sup> hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to give us a reviving, to set up the house of our God, and <sup>v</sup> to repair the desolations thereof, and to give us <sup>w</sup> a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem. **10** And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? for we have forsaken thy commandments, **11** Which thou hast commanded <sup>x</sup> by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land, unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the <sup>y</sup> filthiness of the people of the lands, with their abominations, which have filled it <sup>z</sup> from one end to another with their uncleanness. **12** Now therefore <sup>a</sup> give not your daughters unto their sons, neither take their daughters unto

your sons, <sup>b</sup> nor seek their peace or their wealth for ever: that ye may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and <sup>c</sup> leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever. **13** And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God <sup>d</sup> hast punished us less than our iniquities *deserve*, and hast given us *such* deliverance as this; **14** Should we <sup>e</sup> again break thy commandments, and <sup>f</sup> join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldst not thou be <sup>g</sup> angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that *there should be* no remnant nor escaping? **15** O LORD God of Israel, <sup>h</sup> thou art righteous; for we remain yet escaped, as it *is* this day: behold, we are <sup>i</sup> before thee <sup>j</sup> in our trespasses; for we cannot <sup>k</sup> stand before thee because of this.

<sup>s</sup> Neh. 9. 36.—<sup>t</sup> Psa. 136. 23.—<sup>u</sup> Chap. 7. 28.  
<sup>v</sup> Heb. *to set up*.—<sup>w</sup> Isa. 5. 2.—<sup>x</sup> Heb. *by the hand of thy servants*.—<sup>y</sup> Chap. 6. 21.  
<sup>z</sup> Heb. *from mouth to mouth*: as <sup>2</sup> Kings 21. 16.  
<sup>a</sup> Exod. 23. 32; 34. 16; Deut. 7. 3.—<sup>y</sup> Deut.

23. 6.—<sup>z</sup> Prov. 13. 22; 20. 7.—<sup>a</sup> Psa. 103. 10.  
<sup>b</sup> Heb. *hast withheld beneath our iniquities*.—<sup>c</sup> John 5. 14; 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21.—<sup>d</sup> Verse 2;  
 Neh. 13. 23, 27.—<sup>e</sup> Deut. 9. 8.—<sup>f</sup> Neh. 9. 33; Dan. 9. 14.—<sup>g</sup> Rom. 3. 19.—<sup>h</sup> 1 Cor. 15. 17.—<sup>i</sup> Psa. 130. 3.

**9. We were bondmen**—Having been subject to Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian kings. **Kings of Persia**—Especially Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes. **To give us a wall in Judah**—Another metaphorical expression (compare *give a nail*, in verse 8) presenting the idea of a fenced inclosure, a fortified town, whose surrounding walls were a means of defence against enemies. The new community at Jerusalem had found the favours of the Persian kings a wall of defence against their foes. So in Isa. v, 2, 5, the house of Israel is represented as a well-fenced vineyard.

**11. Commanded by thy servants the prophets**—Especially by Moses, the great prophet (Deut. xviii, 15) and lawgiver. Comp. with this and the next verse Exod. xxiii, 32; xxxiv, 12–16; Deut. vii, 1–3.

**12. Nor seek their peace or their wealth**—Quoted from Deut. xxiii, 6. The sense is, thou shalt *not* make it an object of care to promote the welfare or prosperity of the heathen.

**14. Wouldst not thou be angry**—The question is the strongest possible confession that they merited the Divine anger.

**15. In our trespasses**—Thus he

leaves the case with his God, who is eminently **righteous**. But he does not venture to ask pardon for Israel's enormous *trespasses*. It will not do to pray for that until Israel ceases to do evil.

## CHAPTER X.

PUTTING AWAY THE STRANGE WIVES,  
1–17.

To us, with our Christian sentiments and feelings respecting the inviolability of the marriage relation, this procedure of Ezra in enforcing the separation of these Jews from their wives seems exceedingly harsh and severe. Nor is it to be reconciled, or reconcilable, with our Lord's profound teaching that the marriage relation is closer and more inviolable than any other human relation, and never to be sundered except in the case of fornication. Matt. v, 32; xix, 4–9. But Ezra's action must be viewed and explained from the Mosaic standpoint. His mission was to reconstruct the Jewish state on the basis of the law of Moses, and that law, as we have seen, expressly prohibited marriages with the heathen. Exod. xxxiv, 12–16; Deut. vii, 3. It was also well known that marriages with the heathen, and the consequent adop-

## CHAPTER X.

**N**OW <sup>a</sup>when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down <sup>b</sup> before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel <sup>a</sup> a very great congregation of men and women and children: for the people <sup>a</sup> wept very sore. ■ And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have <sup>c</sup> trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing.

<sup>a</sup> Dan. 9. 20. — <sup>b</sup> 2 Chron. 20. 9. — 1 Hebrew, *wept a great weeping*. — <sup>c</sup> Neh. 13. 27. — <sup>d</sup> 2 Chron. 34. 31.

tion of heathen abominations, has been the main cause of all the woes of Israel. And now, in reconstructing the Jewish state, it would be fatal to the permanence of the same to allow the precedent of extensive intermarriages of this kind to stand unrebuked. Ezra could not but see that such a precedent, if established, would govern the life and conduct of his people for the generations that were to follow, and it was plainly irreconcilable with Mosaic law. It was better, therefore, to check the evil then, though it cost great sorrow and trouble, than to let it alone to ruin all the holy seed.

**1. There assembled . . . a very great congregation**—It seems that Ezra's prayer and his agonizing attitude had brought the most of them together. His position **before the house of God**, in the fore-court of the temple, at the time when many would naturally be resorting there for the worship of the evening sacrifice, (ix, 4, 5,) and his attitude of kneeling down and spreading out his hands towards heaven, would soon attract a multitude around him, and his touching prayer would naturally make them weep. **For the people wept very sore**. Or, as the margin, *wept a great weeping*. And this helped further to call a large assembly to the spot.

**2. Of the sons of Elam**—Two individuals of this name are mentioned in the list of those who returned with Zerubbabel, (chap. ii, 7, 31,) but there is nothing to decide which one of them is here intended. Compare verse 26.

**3** Now therefore let us make <sup>a</sup> a covenant with our God <sup>2</sup> to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that <sup>c</sup> tremble at <sup>e</sup> the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law. **4** Arise; for *this* matter *belongeth* unto thee: we also *will* be with thee: <sup>2</sup> be of good courage, and do *it*. **5** Then arose Ezra, and made the chief priests, the Levites, and all Israel, <sup>h</sup> to swear that they should do according to this word. And they swore. **6** Then Ezra rose up from before the house of

<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *to bring forth*. — <sup>e</sup> Chapter 9. 4. — <sup>f</sup> Deut. 7. 2, 3. — <sup>g</sup> 1 Chron. 28. 10. — <sup>h</sup> Neh. 5. 12.

**Now there is hope**—From the fact that the people weep. There is always *hope* for sinners that are penitent enough to weep.

**3. Make a covenant**—Enter into a solemn agreement, and swear **to put away all the wives**. Comp. verses 5, 12, 19. **And such as are born of them**—This was Shechaniah's proposition; but how far the children with their mothers were *put away* does not appear, for in verses 11 and 19 there is no mention of children. Doubtless all infant children went with their mothers, and this would be likely to be the rule with all children, unless some, old enough to express a choice, preferred to be adopted into the Jewish community. Such might have been retained as proselytes. See note on verse 44. **The counsel of my lord**—The advice and arrangements which Ezra might propose. Thus Shechaniah courteously addresses Ezra. **Those that tremble**—Those who, like Ezra, had a keen sense of the dangers of the hour, and the people's exposure to the curse of God. See note on chap. ix, 4. **According to the law**—The whole reform should proceed in strict accordance with the law of Moses.

**4. Arise**—Ezra was probably still bowed down before the temple. Verse 1, note. **Unto thee**—Ezra possessed the proper authority from the king, (chap. vii, 25,) and the wisdom to institute the needed reformation.

**5. Made . . . all Israel to swear**—That is, *all Israel* that were present and represented on that occasion.

God, and went into the chamber of **Johanan** the son of **Eliashib**: and *when* he came thither, he <sup>1</sup>did eat no bread, nor drink water: for he mourned because of the transgression of them that had been carried away. **7** And they made <sup>k</sup>proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem; **8** And <sup>l</sup>that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be <sup>3</sup>forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away. **9** Then all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered themselves together unto Jerusalem within three days. *It was* the ninth month, on the twentieth *day* of the month; and <sup>m</sup>all the people sat in the street of the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter, and for <sup>4</sup>the great rain. **10** And **Ezra** the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have

transgressed, and <sup>6</sup>have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel.

**11** Now therefore <sup>n</sup>make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and <sup>o</sup>separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives. **12** Then all the congregation answered and said with a loud voice, As thou hast said, so must we do. **13** But the people *are* many, and *it is* a time of much rain, and we are not able to stand without, neither *is this* a work of one day or two: for <sup>6</sup>we are many that have transgressed in this thing. **14** Let now our rulers of all the congregation stand, and let all them which have taken strange wives in our cities come at appointed times, and with them the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, until <sup>p</sup>the fierce wrath of our God <sup>7</sup>for this matter be turned from us. **15** Only **Jonathan** the son of **Asahel** and **Jahaziah** the son of **Tikvah** <sup>8</sup>were employed about this *matter*: and **Meshullam** and **Shabbethai** the

<sup>i</sup> Deut. 9. 18.—<sup>k</sup> Chap. 1. 1; 2 Chron. 30. 5.  
—<sup>l</sup> Chap. 7. 26.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *devoted*.—<sup>m</sup> See 1 Sam. 12. 18.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *the showers*.—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *have caused to dwell, or, have brought back*.

<sup>n</sup> Josh. 7. 19; Prov. 28. 13.—<sup>o</sup> Verse 3.—<sup>6</sup> Or, *we have greatly offended in this thing*.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Chron. 30. 8.—<sup>7</sup> Or, *till this matter be dispatched*.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *stood*.

**6. Chamber of Johanan**—One of the chambers or cells of the temple where this **son of Eliashib** abode. Compare Neh. xiii, 4, 5. **Johanan**, or **Jehohanan**, was probably the same as **Jonathan** in Neh. xii, 11. In that case we must understand the word *son* here as grandson. Davidson asserts (*Kitto's Cyc.*) that **Eliashib** lived after **Nehemiah**, but this does not show but that he lived at the time of **Nehemiah** and of **Ezra** also, and long before his death his grandson might have occupied a chamber of the temple, and exercised the priestly functions. **Did eat no bread, nor drink water**—Like **Moses** when he mourned for the transgression of Israel, Deut. ix, 18.

**7. They made proclamation**—Namely, the princes and elders. See next verse. Literally, *They made a voice pass in Judah*, etc. See note on chapter i, 1.

**8. Forfeited**—Placed under ban, and thereby devoted to **Jehovah**. See note on Josh. vi, 17.

**9. The ninth month**—Chislen, corresponding with December, the rainy season of Palestine, and hence the

great rain mentioned in this verse.

**In the street of the house of God**—In the open broad place before the temple; in the court.

**12. All... answered**—It was the loud uttered vow and pledge of a vast assembly to conform to the Divine requirement. Compare Josh. i, 16–18, notes.

**13. Not able to stand without**—It was impracticable then and there to rectify the whole matter, and attend to each individual case. Hence the adoption of the plan of procedure described below. Verses 14–17.

**14. Come at appointed times**—They probably arranged for them to come according to families, or, perhaps, according to cities, and the elders of every city, and the judges thereof, came along with them to be witnesses and judges of cases known to them.

**15. Only Jonathan**—So simplified and complete was the method here adopted of disposing of each case, that only the four persons named in this verse were required to attend to the chief burden of it, such as recording the names and evidence in each case.

Levite helped them. **16** And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter.* **17** And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.

**18** And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: *namely, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah.* **19** And they *'gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and being guilty, they offered a ram of the flock for their trespass.* **20** And of the sons of Immer; Hanani, and Zebadiah. **21** And of the sons of Harim; Maaseiah, and Elijah, and Shem-

aiah, and Jehiel, and Uziah. **22** And of the sons of Pashur; Elieoenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah. **23** Also of the Levites; Jozabad, and Shimei, and Kelaiah, (the same is Kelita,) Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer. **24** Of the singers also; Elia-shib: and of the porters; Shallum, and Telem, and Uri. **25** Moreover of Israel: of the sons of Parosh; Raniah, and Jeziel, and Malchiah, and Miamin, and Eleazar, and Malchijah, and Ben-aiah. **26** And of the sons of Elam; Mattaniah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, and Abdi, and Jeremoth, and Eliah. **27** And of the sons of Zattu; Elieoenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, and Jeremoth, and Zabad, and Aziza. **28** Of the sons also of Bebai; Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, and Athlai. **29** And of the sons of Bani; Meshullam, Malluch, and Adahiah, Jashub, and Sheal, and Ramoth

q 2 Kings 10. 15; 1 Chron. 29. 24;

2 Chron. 30. 8.—r Lev. 6. 4, 6.

These acted under the general oversight and direction of Ezra and the persons mentioned in the next verse.

**16. Children of the captivity did so**—That is, the persons implicated, and the whole people, adopted the plan arranged by Ezra. **After the house of their fathers**—So that every father's house was represented. **All of them by their names**—The name of each of the more distinguished fathers was probably called, and from each family thus represented a person was chosen, and all these, with Ezra himself, **were separated**, that is, chosen and set apart, **to examine the matter**. They had the responsibility and control of the investigation and decision of each case, while the four persons named in the previous verse were probably required to act as secretaries for them.

**17. End...first month**—So that they were employed three months in the matter.

#### LIST OF THOSE WHO HAD TAKEN STRANGE WIVES, 18-44.

So important to the new community was the whole procedure, that the names of the implicated ones were chronicled, and immortalized in connexion with this sad affair. Ezra embodied the list in his own book as a

testimony of his care for Israel, and here it still stands, a monument of his fidelity to the people of his God.

The list gives, 1) the names of the sons of the priests who had taken strange wives, verses 18-22; 2) the names of the Levites, verse 23; 3) the names of the singers, verse 24; 4) the names of non-official or ordinary Israelites, verses 25-43.

**19. Gave their hands**—As a solemn form of indicating their acceptance of the covenant, (verse 3.) and of binding themselves to **put away their wives**. Handshaking is a natural ceremony of ratifying a solemn agreement between parties. Comp. 2 Kings x, 15. **A ram... for their trespass**—According to the law of Levit. vi, 1-6.

**25. Moreover of Israel**—That is, of non-official or simple Israelites, as distinguished from the priests, Levites, and singers just mentioned. The names of the chief fathers of this list are all found in the list of those who returned from Babylon with Zerubabel, chap. ii. The **Bani** of verse 34 is not to be identified with the **Bani** of verse 29. The latter is probably the *Bani* of chapter ii, 10, while the other is, perhaps, a corruption of Bezai, (of chapter ii, 17,) or possibly the name of some person not mentioned at all in the list of chapter ii.

**30** And of the sons of Pahath-moab; Adna, and Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezaleel, and Binnui, and Manasseh. **31** And of the sons of Harim; Eliezer, Ishijah, Malehiah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, **32** Benjamin, Mal-luch, and Shemariah. **33** Of the sons of Hashum; Mattenai, Mattathah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, and Shimei. **34** Of the sons of Bani; Maadai, Amram, and Uel, **35** Benaiah, Bedeiah, Chelluh, **36** Vaniah, Mere-

moth, Eliashib, **37** Mattaniah, Mattenai, and Jaasau, **38** And Bani, and Binnui, Shimei, **39** And Shelemiah, and Nathan, and Adaiah, **40** Maad-nadebai, Shashai, Sharai, **41** Azareel, and Shelemiah, Shemariah, **42** Shel-lum, Amariah, and Joseph. **43** Of the sons of Nebo; Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jadau, and Joeli, Benaiah. **44** All these had taken \*strange wives: and some of them had wives by whom they had children.

9 Or, *Mubnadebai*, according to some copies.

s Proverbs 2. 16; 5. 3, 20; 6. 24.

**44. Wives by whom they had children**—The Hebrew reads literally, *And there were of them* (הם, *them*, is here masculine, and seems to refer to all these at the beginning of the verse,) *wives, and they set* (or placed, וישמו, the masculine form of the verb) *children*. The brevity and obscurity of the text are such as to make the exact meaning very doubtful. The naked statement of our common version, which follows in sense the Septuagint and Vulgate, that some of these wives had children, seems bootless. The masculine form of the verb, as well as its peculiar meaning of *setting, appointing*, etc., inclines one to think that the writer here speaks of some disposition which some of these husbands, who put away their wives, made also of their children. Bertheau conjectures that וישמו may be a corruption of גרשים, (*thrust out*, used of divorce in Lev. xxi, 7,) and has been transposed from its proper place before *wives*, so that originally the text read: *And some of them thrust out wives and children*. While not prepared to accept this emendation of the text, we think it brings out substantially the meaning which the Hebrew writer meant to convey. For verse 3 implies that children as well as wives were put away.

The Book of Ezra ends abruptly here, but this reformation was not the end of his ministry for Israel. How long he continued at Jerusalem after the events of this chapter we have no means of knowing, but it is very supposable that he continued there at least some days, in order to instruct the people further in the knowledge

of the law. Many have thought that he remained at Jerusalem as governor until the twentieth year of Artaxerxes, when Nehemiah was appointed to that office by the king. But if Ezra had been superseded by Nehemiah we should, doubtless, have had some notice of it in the history of the latter. The abrupt termination of this book, and the subsequent relapse of the Jews at Jerusalem, and their deplorable state when Nehemiah came, leads us rather to the opinion that Ezra soon returned again to Babylon. This view is favoured by the fact that his commission was only to bear the gifts of the king and his counsellors, and "to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem." Chap. vii, 14.

Several years later Ezra appears at Jerusalem again, in connexion with Nehemiah and many Levites, reading and expounding the law to a great assembly of the people. Neh. viii. The agreement of the ancient traditions in associating Ezra with the Great Synagogue, and the formation of the Old Testament Canon, may authorize us to believe at least this much, that in concert with Nehemiah and the leading Jews of his time he did collect and arrange the books of the Old Testament Canon in substantially the form in which we now possess them. He lived at a time when such a work could best be done, and he had facilities for doing it which no later age possessed. And it may be added, he alone of all the Jews of his age was most competent to perform a work of such responsibility and care. How long he lived after this is uncertain. Josephus says he died at an advanced age, and was

buried with distinguished honours at Jerusalem; but other traditions have it that he died on his way back to Persia, and his reputed tomb is still shown on the banks of the Tigris, about twenty miles above its junction with the Euphrates.

Ezra was unquestionably one of the greatest men of his age, and his mighty influence upon his people is attested by the almost innumerable traditions of his character and works, which afterwards sprung up among the Jews, and still linger about his name. He is said to have introduced the square

character into Hebrew writing, and also to have established the office of *dragoman*, or interpreter, whose duty it was to translate and explain the words of the Scriptures as they were read in the synagogue. He is said to have been the founder and first president of the Great Synagogue, and, in fact, of the entire system of synagogue worship as it afterwards prevailed among the Jews of all lands. To him has been attributed the authorship of several books of the Old Testament, [Chronicles, Nehemiah, Esther,] besides this one which bears his name.



THE TOMB OF EZRA.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

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THIS book takes its name from the individual whose chief acts it records, and is a continuation, in its subject-matter, of the Book of Ezra. In some of the ancient catalogues it is called *Second Ezra*. It is probably the latest of the historical books, and is invaluable for the light it sheds on the condition of the returned exiles during the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus. Here we see the continued and growing enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans. We are impressed with the exceedingly feeble and dependent state of the entire Jewish community. We observe a growing tendency to break away from strict adherence to Mosaism, and to mix up by intermarriages and trade with heathen nations. Even the high priest gives encouragement to foreign alliances. Thus this book, like the other Scriptures, is true to the design of sacred history, showing the faults and woes of the chosen people, as well as their virtues and triumphs. And the frankness with which the deplorable weakness of the Jews is told, the record of their sins and corruptions, of their humiliation and penitence, together with the absence of miraculous narrative, has so utterly disarmed adverse criticism that the authenticity of the Book of Nehemiah has hardly been questioned at all.

## Authorship and Date.

There is no weighty argument against the traditional opinion that this book came in substantially its present form from the hand of Nehemiah himself. No one questions that Nehemiah was the author of chapters i-vii, 6, and xii, 31-xiii; but the central part of the work, chapters vii, 6-xii, 31, is noticeably different in its style. The writer does not here speak in the first person, and Nehemiah does not appear as the principal actor, and there seems to be a different use of the divine names, *Jehovah*, *Adonai*, *Elohim*. But all these differences are no proof that Nehemiah did not compile this part of the work. All the historical writers of the Old Testament make use of documents of which they were not, strictly speaking, the authors; and the books in which such documents are incorporated are not for that reason to be torn apart, and their genuineness denied. Chapter

vii, 6-73 is professedly "a register" which Nehemiah "found," and while no one would ever suppose that Nehemiah composed it, it is very evident that he inserted it in his narrative. In like manner chapter viii-xi, 30 may have been composed in whole or in part by some of Nehemiah's contemporaries—perhaps by Ezra, or some Levite—but transferred by Nehemiah into the body of his own work. Chapter ix, 5-38 is a prayer which was very probably prepared by Ezra, and chapters x, 1-27, xi, 3-26, contain lists of names which were doubtless taken from the public annals. Compare chapter xii, 23, note. Setting aside, then, these portions, on which there is no room for controversy, there remain only chapter viii-ix, 3, and x, 28-xi, 2, whose origin may seem doubtful. These passages may, indeed, have been written by some priest or Levite, or they may have been written by Nehemiah himself. Keil points to a sufficient reason for the change of style and the lack of prominence given to Nehemiah by calling attention to the peculiar contents of these passages. They relate to priestly and Levitical matters, in which the Tirshatha, or civil ruler, could not appear as the most prominent individual, and therefore would not speak of himself in the first person.

It appears from chapter v, 14 and xiii, 6 that Nehemiah compiled this work after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes. No one would assign an earlier date; but the mention of Jaddua, the great grandson of Eliashib, and Darius the Persian, chapter xii, 11, 22, has led many critics to date the composition as late as the time of Alexander the Great, when the Persian dominion had ceased. These passages, however, may have been interpolated by a later hand. See notes on chapter xii, 22, 23. But if, with many expositors, we identify Darius the Persian with Darius Nothus, then we may show that both Nehemiah and Jaddua were living in his reign. Artaxerxes Longimanus reigned forty years, and was succeeded, about a year after his death, by Darius Nothus, who reigned nineteen years. Supposing Nehemiah to have been forty years old when he was made governor at Jerusalem, he would have been but sixty at the time of Artaxerxes' death; and had he lived through all the reign of Darius Nothus he would then have been eighty, a not improbable age for a man of his habits to attain. And surely Jaddua, the grandson of Joiada, may have been born many years before this date, and have been prospectively high priest when Nehemiah wrote his narrative. The whole book, in substantially its present form, may, therefore, have been compiled by Nehemiah himself, and finished some time in the reign of Darius Nothus, though the principal portions were probably written soon after the thirty-third year of Artaxerxes' reign.

## Contents.

WE may appropriately divide the book into three sections. The *first* extends through chapters i-vi, and recounts the various facts and incidents of Nehemiah's commission, and the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem. The *second* embraces chapters vii-xii, 43, and gives an account of the more thorough organization and religious discipline of the new community at Jerusalem. It contains various genealogies and lists, shows how the people were instructed in the law and led to observe various religious festivals, and concludes with a description of the dedication of the walls. The *third* section, chapter xii, 44 to the end, gives an account of various reforms effected by Nehemiah after he came to Jerusalem the second time.

### SECTION FIRST.

#### The Rebuilding of the Walls and Gates. Chaps. I-VI.

The Sad Tidings from Judah .....	i, 1-3	Scorn of the Samaritans .....	ii, 19, 20
Nehemiah's Grief and Prayer .....	i, 4-11	Building of the Gates and Walls and Names of the Builders.....	iii, 1-32
Nehemiah Commissioned to Rebuild the Walls of Jerusalem .....	ii, 1-8	Troubles from the Samaritans.....	iv, 1-23
Nehemiah's Journey to Jerusalem and Night-view of its Walls .....	ii, 9-16	Reforming of Abuses .....	v, 1-13
Preparations to Build.....	ii, 17, 18	Nehemiah's Self-denial.....	v, 14-19
		More Troubles from the Enemy.....	vi, 1-19

### SECTION SECOND.

#### Theocratic Organization and Discipline of the New Community.

#### Chaps. VII-XII, 43.

The Guarding of the Gates. ....	vii, 1-3	The Sealed Covenant .....	ix, 38-x, 27
Genealogical Registry of the People..	vii, 4-73	Oath of the People to Keep the Law.	x, 28-31
The Reading and Expounding of the Law .....	viii, 1-8	Provision for the Temple-service ....	x, 32-39
The Feast of the New Moon.....	viii, 9-12	The Inhabitants of Jerusalem Increased	xi, 1, 2
The Feast of Tabernacles.....	viii, 13-18	List of the Chiefs of the Province ....	xi, 8-36
The Day of Penitence and Prayer....	ix, 1-37	Lists of the Priests and Levites .....	xii, 1-26
		Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem	xii, 27-43

### SECTION THIRD.

#### Nehemiah's Later Reforms. Chaps. XII, 44-XIII, 31.

Levitical Appointments.....	xii, 44-47	The Portions of the Levites Restored unto them .....	xiii, 10-14
The Separation from Strangers.....	xiii, 1-3	Sabbath Desecration Stopped.....	xiii, 15-22
Cleansing of the Chamber Occupied by Tobiah .....	xiii, 4-9	Foreign Marriages Dissolved.....	xiii, 23-31
VOL. IV.—28		O. T.	

# THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH.

## CHAPTER I.

**T**HE words of \* Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass

a Chapter 10. 1.

## SECTION FIRST.

CHAPTERS I-VI.

## THE REBUILDING OF THE WALLS AND GATES OF JERUSALEM.

## CHAPTER I.

THE SAD TIDINGS FROM JUDAH, 1-3.

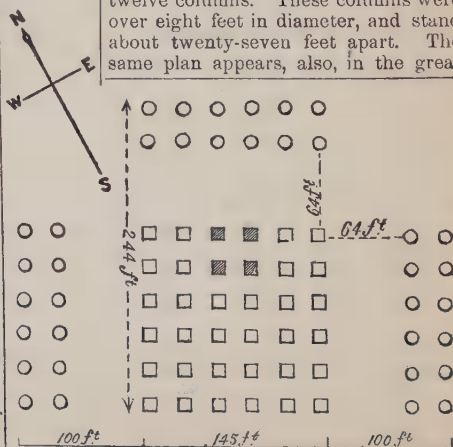
1. **The words of Nehemiah**—Like each book of the twelve minor prophets, this Book of Nehemiah opens with an announcement of its author's name. In this it differs from all the other historical books. Nehemiah is here called **the son of Hachaliah**, but otherwise his genealogy is unknown. He was, probably, like Zerubbabel, a descendant of the house of Judah, and of the family of David. His *words* are here to

be understood, not merely as his discourses, but his acts and experiences also. **The month Chisleu**—The ninth month of the Jewish year, corresponding nearly with our December. It was amid the rains of this same month, twelve years before, that the Jews assembled at Jerusalem to Ezra to confess their sins, and to put away their heathen wives. Ezra x, 9. **The twentieth year**—Of Artaxerxes, king of Persia. Comp. chap. ii, 1. **Shushan the palace**—So called because it was the seat of the principal *palace* of the Persian Empire. Strabo says (xv, 3, 3) that the palace of this place was embellished

in the <sup>b</sup> month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, **2** That Hanani, one of my brethren,

b Ezra 10. 9; Zech. 7. 1.

more than the other palaces of the empire. *Shushan*, or, as it is more commonly called, *Susa*, was the winter residence of the kings of Persia, as Ecbatana was their summer residence. See note on Ezra vi, 2. It has been identified with the modern *Sus*, or *Shush*. Its ruins cover a space six thousand feet long, by four thousand five hundred feet broad. By excavations made in these mounds of rubbish, Mr. Loftus, in 1852, discovered what he regards as the remains of the identical *palace* mentioned here and in the Book of Esther. He ascertained the position of the seventy-two columns of the ancient palace, and was thus enabled to present the following ground-plan. In this plan there is a great central hall of thirty-six columns, surrounded on three sides by great porches, each having twelve columns. These columns were over eight feet in diameter, and stand about twenty-seven feet apart. The same plan appears, also, in the great



came, he and *certain* men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. **3** And they said unto me, The remnant that

c Chap. 2. 17.

palace of Xerxes at Persepolis. See note on Esther v, 1. These exterior porches were, according to Fergusson, the great audience halls, and served the same purpose as the "house of the forest of Lebanon" in Solomon's palace. It was at this great palace that Daniel saw his vision of the ram and the he goat, (Dan. viii, 2;) here Xerxes "sat on the throne of his kingdom" when he ordered the feast at which he proposed to exhibit the beauty of his queen Vashti, (Esther i, 2;) and here Nehemiah served as cupbearer.

Shushan was one of the most ancient and celebrated cities of the East, and was wisely fixed upon by the kings of Persia as the chief seat of their court and empire. Its ruins are situated about one hundred miles north of the northern end of the Persian Gulf, in a fertile region watered by the rivers Kherkhah and Dizful.

**2. Hanani, one of my brethren—**Called emphatically his own brother in chap. vii, 2. **I asked them—**Hence it does not seem that they were sent, as some suggest, expressly to inform Nehemiah of the sad state of things at Jerusalem. **Jews that had escaped—**Those that had survived all the calamities and dangers to which the new community at Jerusalem had been exposed. **Which were left of the captivity—**Or, *which remained*. This further defines the preceding clause, as meaning those returned exiles who were still to be found in Judea; those who remained out of multitudes that had fallen.

**3. There in the province—**The province of Judea. Comp. Ezra v, 8. **In great affliction and reproach—**From the time of the arrival there of Zerubbabel and the first body of exiles until this date, the returned Jews had been vexed and troubled by neighbouring enemies—the descendants of the nations whom the eastern kings had

are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: "the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

d 2 Kings 25. 10.

settled in the cities of Samaria. And though by the favour of the Persian kings they had succeeded in rebuilding the temple, they were still in a comparatively weak and helpless state, and their now implacable enemies, the Samaritans, would naturally take every opportunity that offered to trouble and distress them. **The wall...broken down, and the gates...burned—**This partly explains their *affliction and reproach*. The returned exiles had never been able to rebuild the walls and gates of their loved city; and because they still remained in the ruined condition to which the Chaldean army had reduced them more than a century before, (2 Kings xxv, 9, 10,) it was a standing *affliction and reproach* to the Jews.

Some critics aver that this ruinous state of the wall and gates of Jerusalem must have been caused by some recent calamity—probably by those neighbouring heathen tribes whose daughters had been married to certain Jews, but had been lately put away by Ezra's legislation, as described in Ezra x. They urge that the destruction effected by Nebuchadnezzar's army more than a hundred years before could have been no *news* to Nehemiah. But this, like the position of these same critics on the passage in Ezra iv, 6–23, (where see notes,) lacks support in the Scripture history. If the walls of Jerusalem had ever been rebuilt since their destruction by Nebuchadnezzar, it is strange that no mention of it occurs in these histories. Their rebuilding by Nehemiah was considered of such importance that a considerable portion of this book is given to a description of it, and any previous work of the kind must have been of sufficient importance to demand, at least, a passing notice. But no such notice is found. The complaint of the Jews' enemies in Ezra iv, 12–16, that the returned exiles

4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I <sup>a</sup>sat down and wept, and mourned *certain* days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, 5 And said, I beseech thee, 'O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, <sup>b</sup>that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: || Let thine ear now be attentive, and <sup>c</sup>thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and <sup>d</sup>confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. 7 <sup>e</sup>We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have <sup>f</sup>not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. 8 Re-

<sup>e</sup> 1 Sam. 4. 17, 22; Ezra 10. 1; Rom. 12. 15.—<sup>f</sup> Dan. 9. 4.—<sup>g</sup> Exod. 20. 6.—<sup>h</sup> 1 Kings 8. 28, 29; 2 Chron. 6. 40; Dan. 9. 17, 18.—<sup>i</sup> Dan. 9. 20.—<sup>k</sup> Psa. 106. 6; Dan. 9. 5.—<sup>l</sup> Deut. 28. 15.

were building up the walls of the city, was, as we have shown in the notes there, a crafty misrepresentation, a perversion of the truth, for they were rebuilding the temple, not the city. A work of such importance as the rebuilding of the walls and gates of Jerusalem needs stronger evidence than that letter of the enemies of Judah, so manifestly given to misrepresentation, as the whole context shows.

It may not have been positively *news* to Nehemiah to be told that the walls and gates of Jerusalem were broken down and destroyed, but this fact was mentioned as showing the great cause or occasion of the affliction and reproach of the Jews at Jerusalem, and seems to have first suggested to Nehemiah the importance of having those walls and gates rebuilt. A work of such magnitude as the rebuilding of that ancient city, and especially of its defences, could not have been undertaken without express permission from the king, and no such permit had ever yet been granted since its destruction by the king of Babylon. The proclamations of Cyrus and Darius authorized only the rebuilding of the temple, and that any thing more than this had yet been attempted by the Jews is without proof

member, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, <sup>m</sup>If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: 9 <sup>n</sup>But *if* ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; <sup>o</sup>though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, *yet* will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. 10 <sup>p</sup>Now these *are* thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. 11 O Lord, I beseech thee, <sup>q</sup>let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who <sup>r</sup>desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's <sup>s</sup>cupbearer.

<sup>m</sup> Lev. 26. 33; Deut. 4. 25-27; 28. 64.—<sup>n</sup> Lev. 26. 39, &c.; Deut. 4. 29-31; 30. 2.—<sup>o</sup> Deut. 30. 4.—<sup>p</sup> Deut. 9. 29; Dan. 9. 15.—<sup>q</sup> Verse 6.—<sup>r</sup> Isa. 26. 8; Heb. 13. 18.—<sup>s</sup> Chap. 2. 1.

#### NEHEMIAH'S GRIEF AND PRAYER, 4-11.

4. **I sat down and wept**—Perhaps now for the first time a deep, keen sense of his people's woes came over his soul.

5. **The great and terrible God**—As his fearful judgments on his own people showed. **Mercy for them that love him**—As the law and his word by the prophets, and the whole history of Israel, abundantly testified.

6. **Thine ear... thine eyes**—He that formed the *ear*, shall he not hear his children's cry? He that made the *eye*, shall he not see the sufferings of his people?

7. **Commandments... statutes... judgments**—Embracing respectively the moral precepts, like the ten commandments, the established rites and ceremonies of worship, and the judicial decision in respect to sin and righteousness. **Thy servant Moses**—Moses and the law were then associated as now, and here is evidence that the Pentateuch was familiar to Nehemiah. Compare the marginal references in the next two verses.

11. **Mercy in the sight of this man**—Favour before king Artaxerxes. Upon hearing of the great affliction and reproach of the Jews at Jerusa-

## CHAPTER II.

**A**ND it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of <sup>a</sup>Artaxerxes the king, *that wine was before him*: and <sup>b</sup>I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had

<sup>a</sup> Ezra 7. 1. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 1. 11.

lem, Nehemiah seems to have conceived the design of obtaining authority from the king to rebuild Jerusalem. This he made a matter of prayer night and day for about four months, (see note on chap. ii. 1,) and in these verses we doubtless have the substance of the prayer he offered continually until he obtained his desire. **This man**—"The mighty monarch of the Persian empire would be addressed by his flatterers as if he were more than man; yet Nehemiah knew that in the sight of God he was upon a level with his meanest subjects."—*Scott*. **The king's cupbearer**—An officer of high rank in the ancient oriental courts, whose business was to take charge of the royal wines, and pour them out and bear them in drinking vessels to the king. In Gen. xl, 1, the original word is rendered *butler*. Rabshakeh is supposed to have held this office in the Assyrian court. See note on 2 Kings xviii, 17.



ROYAL CUP-BEARER, (FROM THE ASSYRIAN MONUMENTS.)

not been *beforetime* sad in his presence. **2** Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but <sup>c</sup>sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, **3** And said unto the king.

<sup>c</sup> Proverbs 15. 13.

## CHAPTER II.

NEHEMIAH COMMISSIONED TO REBUILD THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM, 1-8.

**1. The month Nisan**—The name, after the exile, of the first month of the Jewish year, corresponding nearly with April, and more anciently called *Abib*. Exod. xiii, 4; comp. xii, 2. This was the first Nisan that followed the Chisleu (chap. i, 1) when Nehemiah heard the sad tidings from Judah, and four months after that time, but both these months fell in the **twentieth year of Artaxerxes**. For a notice of this king, see note on Ezra vii, 1. **Took up the wine, and gave it unto the king**—This was a part of the business of the royal cupbearer. See note above, on chap. i, 11. **Had not been beforetime sad**—We may better omit *beforetime* and translate the past tense of the verb, as is often proper, so as to express an habitual state or condition, *I was not accustomed to be sad in his presence*. The Hebrew word for sad (<sup>y</sup>) commonly means *bad, ill-favoured, evil*; and is appropriately used of the troubled and dejected countenance of a cupbearer, which should naturally be cheerful and happy, as became his business, to cheer the heart of the king. Various ancient authors attest the propensity of the Persians for wine. Herodotus says, (i, 133,) "They are very fond of wine, and drink it in large quantities." And, according to H. Rawlinson, it is customary at the present day for the high livers among the Persians "to sit for hours before dinner drinking wine and eating dried fruits. A party often sits down at seven o'clock, and the dinner is not brought in till eleven."

**2. I was . . . sore afraid**—The king's question was probably altogether unexpected, and coming on that public occasion, when the queen was also present, (verse 6,) and, perhaps, many

“Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when <sup>e</sup>the city, the place of my fathers’ sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? **4** Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? **5** So I prayed to the God of heaven. **5** And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers’ sepulchres, that I

d1 Kings 1. 31; Dan. 2. 4; 5. 10; 6. 6, 21.  
e Chapter 1. 3.

nobles of the court, he was filled with confusion, and feared that the presenting of his cause on such an occasion might expose it to failure, and himself to scorn and punishment. Perhaps he feared, too, that the king might suspect some foul designs in his heart.

### 3. Let the king live forever—

A common form of royal salutation. Compare marginal references. **The city, the place of my fathers’ sepulchres**—A touching allusion, calculated to affect the hearts both of the king and the queen. Nehemiah here calls Jerusalem, literally, *the house of the graves of his fathers*, and hence it has been inferred that he was of the seed of David, whose royal sons were “buried in the city of David,” (1 Kings xiv, 31; xv, 24, etc.) so that city was, in fact, the very *house of their graves*.

**4. For what dost thou make request**—The king’s heart was at once touched with sympathy for the sorrow of his cupbearer, and prompted to offer him assistance. Thus God disposeth the hearts of kings. **I prayed**—That he might so order his request as to secure the king’s favour. He that would prevail with men and kings must first know how to prevail in prayer with God.

**5. Send me...that I may build it**—To obtain this request had been the anxious desire of his heart, and the burden of his prayer for many days—even from the time of his hearing of the desolation of Judah. Chap. i, 3, 4.

**6. The queen also sitting by him**—Probably the queen consort, the principal wife, is meant; not one of his concubines, or a mistress, as the Septuagint translates it. The influence of a

may build it. **6** And the king said unto me, (the <sup>1</sup>queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him <sup>a</sup>a time. **7** Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah; **8** And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he may give me timber to

f Chap. 1. 11; 2 Sam. 15. 31; Prov. 3. 6; Phil. 4. 6.  
1 Heb. *wife*.—g Chap. 5. 14; 13. 6.

wife over a Persian monarch is shown in the Book of Esther. **How long**—The king did not wish to lose this noble officer of his court for a great length of time. **I set him a time**—This may have been altered afterwards, and Nehemiah’s leave of absence extended. This would necessarily follow from his being appointed governor, which appointment was made that same year. Nehemiah filled that office for the twelve succeeding years. Chap. v, 14.

**7. Let letters be given me**—This was a wise precaution on the part of Nehemiah, for the **governors beyond the river** were generally hostile to the Jews. Comp. Ezra iv and v.

**8. Keeper of the king’s forest**—The Hebrew word here rendered *forest*, is פָּרְדֵּס, *pardes*, a Persian word,

from which comes (through the Greek) the word *paradise*. It occurs in only two other passages, Eccles. ii, 5, and Cant. iv, 13, and seems to designate an inclosed garden or park, planted with trees and shrubs. “A wide open park, inclosed against injury, yet with its natural beauty unspoiled, with stately forest trees, many of them bearing fruit, watered by clear streams on whose banks roved large herds of antelopes or sheep—this was the scenery which connected itself in the mind of the Greek traveller with the word *paradise*, and for which his own language supplied no precise equivalent.”—SMITH’S *Bib. Dict.* The forest, or *paradise*, mentioned in this verse was one from which Nehemiah wished to procure **timber** for building purposes, and must have been somewhere in Palestine, and probably not far from Jeru-

make beams for the gates of the palace which *appertained* <sup>a</sup> to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, <sup>i</sup> according to the good hand of my God upon me.

9 Then I came to the governors be-

<sup>h</sup> Chap. 3. 7.—<sup>i</sup> Ezra 5. 5; 7. 6,

saïem. There is no evidence that Nehemiah went as far as Lebanon for materials. Some suggest that *the king's forest* may mean the beautiful and well watered gardens which Josephus (viii, 7, 3) mentions as being at Etham, about fifty furlongs from Jerusalem, to which Solomon was wont to ride out in the morning. But the reference may be to all the groves and forests of Palestine, which seem to have been at that time carefully guarded by the kings of Persia, who appointed a special officer to guard them, and see that they were not wantonly destroyed.

**The palace which appertained to the house**—That is, the *palace*, fortress, or castle, which was connected with the temple. Not the palace of Solomon, which probably stood on the southern slope of Ophel, and from which that king had a magnificent ascent to the temple, (1 Kings x, 5,) for we have elsewhere no hint of any attempt to rebuild the royal palace at Jerusalem, and least of all would Nehemiah have proposed at such a time to build it, for that would look like a design to re-establish the *kingdom* of Judah. But this *palace* of the temple, which Nehemiah proposed to build, was probably some such fortress or citadel as that subsequently known as *Antonia*, called also *Baris*, (βάρης seems to have come from בִּירָה, *birah*, here rendered *palace*,

and includes the meaning both of *fortress* and *palace*;) and used under the Asmonean princes as a depository for the vestments of the high priest. *Josephus*, xv, 11, 4. **For the wall**—Timber would be used for building the gates of the wall. **The house that I shall enter into**—His own residence, or headquarters, while he superintended the building of the wall and gates of the city. **According to the good hand**—Compare Ezra vii, 6, note.

yond the river, and gave them the king's letters. Now <sup>a</sup> the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. 10 When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of *it*, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek

9, 28; verse 18.—<sup>k</sup> Ezra 8. 22.

NEHEMIAH'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM AND NIGHT-VIEW OF ITS WALLS, 9-16.

9. **Sent captains of the army and horsemen**—For a safe-conduct. Probably Nehemiah retained these for his guard at Jerusalem.

10. **Sanballat the Horonite**—This noted man seems to have been an officer of the Persian government, holding a military command at Samaria. Compare chapter iv, 2. He is conspicuous in this history solely from his bitter hostility to the Jews. *The Horonite* designates him as a native of *Horonaim*, in the land of Moab: (see Isa. xv, 5; Jer. xlviii, 3, 5, 34:) and his Moabite origin may partly account for his hostility towards Israel. **Tobiah the servant**—What gave him this title of *the servant* is not clear. Perhaps he had been a slave and had gained his freedom, but never lost the title and associations of his former servitude; and in such a case a Jewish writer would naturally emphasize the opprobrious epithet. His own and his son's marriage with the daughter of a Jew created family relationships which proved a source of trouble, (chap. vi, 17-19,) and being allied to the high priest Eliashib (chap. xiii, 4) he secured a chamber in the courts of the temple, from which Nehemiah finally cast out all his household stuff. Chap. xiii, 7, 8. He is here designated as the **Ammonite**, having sprung from that hated race; and, perhaps, his bitterness towards the Jews was owing largely to Ezra's recent legislation in requiring all Jews to put away their foreign wives, (Ezra x,) for they had intermarried with the Ammonites and Moabites. Ezra ix, 1. And these two men, Sanballat and Tobiah, were fit representatives of the ancient and hereditary hatred of their respective races towards Israel.

the welfare of the children of Israel.

**11** So I<sup>1</sup> came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. **12** And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I *any* man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither was *there any* beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

**13** And I went out by night<sup>m</sup> by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were<sup>n</sup> broken down, and the gates thereof were con-

<sup>1</sup> Ezra 8. 32.—<sup>m</sup> 2 Chron. 26. 9; chap. 3. 13.  
<sup>n</sup> Chap. 1. 3; verse 17.

**11. Three days**—See note on Ezra viii, 32.

**12. I arose in the night**—Probably the first night after his arrival. He wished to see how great a work was before him, and he yearned to take a view of the city of his fathers' sepulchres, of which he had heard so much, but had never seen till now; and so with only **some few** attendants, and the solitary **beast** on which he **rode**, he made this night survey. Peculiarly touching and impressive is the thought of this tender-hearted child of the exile viewing by night, and alone, the ruins of the holy city of his fathers.

**13. The gate of the valley**—The gate that opened into the valley of Gihon, on the west side of the city, and just at the point where that valley takes a bend off towards the northwest. This would be at the northwestern corner of Zion, where afterwards stood the Tower of Hippicus, erected by Herod.

**Before the dragon well**—The modern upper pool of Gihon, towards which the gate just mentioned must have opened. What gave it this name is now unknown. **The dung port**—Why our translators rendered the same word *port* here, which they render *gate* above, is not apparent. This dung gate is supposed to have been at or near the southwestern corner of the city wall, where the filth and garbage of this part of the city were carried out and thrown down into the deep valley below. See on chapter iii, 13.

**14. Gate of the fountain**—This was doubtless the gate situated at the mouth of the Tyropœon, and near the

sumed with fire. **14** Then I went on to the<sup>o</sup> gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but *there was* no place for the beast *that was* under me to pass.

**15** Then went I up in the night by the<sup>o</sup> brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and *so* returned. **16** And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told *it* to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

<sup>o</sup> Chapter 3. 15.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Samuel 15. 23.  
Jeremiah 31. 40.

*fountain*, or pool of Siloam. It is to be identified with "the gate between two walls," (2 Kings xxv, 4,) by which king Zedekiah fled from the city. **The king's pool**—Probably that now commonly known as the fountain of the Virgin, a little north of the pool of Siloam, and connected with it by a subterranean passage. By many this is now believed to be the same as the Bethesda of the New Testament. John v, 2. **No place for the beast... to pass**—So filled had the narrow valley become with the rubbish of the long desolate city.

**15. Then went I up... by the brook**—He probably left his beast by the king's pool, and went on foot up *the brook*, or valley of the Kedron, and **viewed the wall** on the east side of the city; then he **turned back**, walking down the brook Kedron again to the place where he left his beast, and then rode back around the southern and western walls, and again **entered** the city by the same **gate of the valley** through which he had gone out.

**16. Jews... priests... nobles... rulers**—The various ranks and classes among the Jewish community. Nehemiah did not at that time make known his night journey around the walls to any one of these various classes. *The Jews* here means the common body of the people, the laity, as distinguished from the *priests*. *The nobles* were those who were known and honoured as descendants of the royal family of David. *The rulers* were the chief officers of the Jewish community living in and about Jerusalem. **Nor to the rest that did the work**—The work

**17** Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: *come*, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more *a* reproach. **18** Then I told them of *the* hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they *strengthened* their hands for *this* good work.

*q* Ezra 7. 1, 2; 10. 2, 4; Isa. 35. 3, 4.—*r* Chap. 1. 3; Psa. 44. 13; 79. 4; Jer. 24. 1; Ezek. 5. 14, 15:

men among the people, as distinguished from the other classes previously mentioned. In every great public work such as Nehemiah was now contemplating, the builders, (Ezra iii, 10,) and all classes of workmen, would have an important interest; yet Nehemiah means to say that while he held important papers from the king, and had come to build the walls and gates of Jerusalem, and made his night survey with this end in view, he had not **as yet** communicated his design to any of the people, nor to their officers and leading men, nor to the workmen upon whom would fall the chief burden of rebuilding the fallen gates and walls.

#### PREPARATIONS TO BUILD, 17, 18.

**17. Ye see the distress**—The same word is rendered *affliction* in chap. i, 3. Nehemiah had now seen with his own eyes that the report was true which informed him in Shushan of the desolation of Jerusalem. *The distress* to which the Jews were subjected by inability to rebuild their city, so long desolate, could be regarded by them in no other light than as **a reproach**.

**18. The king's words**—Nehemiah informed them, doubtless, not only of what the king **had spoken** to him, but also of the letters of authority which he held from the king. **They strengthened their hands**—Encouraged each other, and set vigorously about the work. **For this good work**—Literally, *for good*. Vatablus explains it, *on account of the favour of God and of the king*. But the words seem better taken in the more general sense which the literal rendering gives; they encouraged one another *for good*,

**19** But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard *it*, they *laughed* us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What *is* this thing that ye do? *will ye rebel* against the king? **20** Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: *but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem*.

22. 4.—*s* Ver. 8.—*t* 2 Sam. 2. 7.—*u* Psa. 44. 13; 79. 4; 80. 6.—*v* Chap. 6. 6.—*w* Ezra 4. 3.

not for evil; they set about the work with a good will.

#### SCORN OF THE SAMARITANS, 19, 20.

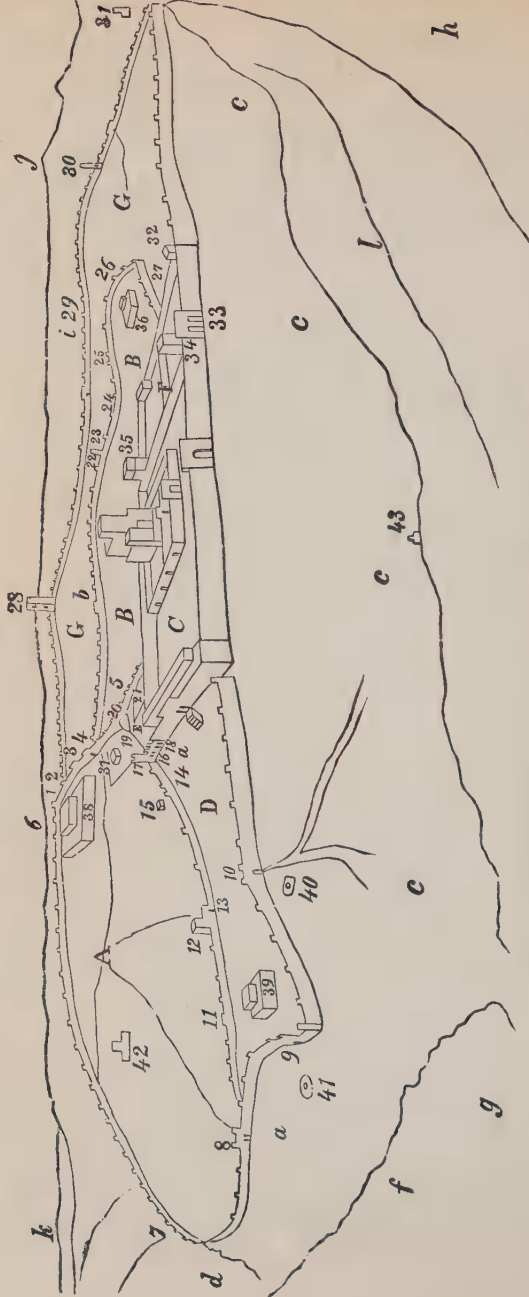
**19. Sanballat...Tobiah**—See on verse 10. **Geshem the Arabian**—Written *Gashum* in chapter vi, 6. Whether he was associated with Sanballat and Tobiah in the government at Samaria, or represented some Arab tribe in another quarter, is uncertain; but in either case he was in league with the Samaritans against the Jews, and most malignant was his enmity to the latter. Compare his vile slander, chapter vi, 6. The Arabians of the desert south of Palestine would naturally oppose the re-establishment of the kingdom of Jerusalem, for it might oppose a barrier to their predatory invasions of that section of the country. **Will ye rebel**—The building of the walls was construed into a design to fortify themselves, and then revolt and become an independent state.

**20. Ye have no portion**—Compare Ezra iv, 3, note.

#### CHAPTER III.

BUILDING OF THE GATES AND WALLS, AND NAMES OF THE BUILDERS, 1-32.

"In regard to the gates of ancient Jerusalem, there exists so much uncertainty that it would seem to be a vain undertaking to investigate the relative positions of them all. Of the ten or twelve gates enumerated in the Book of Nehemiah and other parts of the Old Testament, Reland remarks with truth, that it is uncertain, first, whether they all were situated in the external walls, or, perhaps, lay partly between the different quarters of the



PLAN OF ANCIENT JERUSALEM, (BEFORE ITS DESTRUCTION BY THE ROMANS.)

- |   |  |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| <p><b>A</b>—Upper City.<br/> <b>B</b>—Lower City.<br/> <b>C</b>—Temple<br/> <b>D</b>—Ophel.<br/> <b>E</b>—Millo.<br/> <b>F</b>—Antonia, Court with Tower.<br/> <b>G</b>—New City.<br/> <b>a</b>—The Tyropæon.<br/> <b>c</b>—Valley of the Kedron.<br/> <b>d</b>—Valley of Hinnom.</p> | <p><b>3</b>—Mariamne.<br/> <b>4</b>—Gate Gennath.<br/> <b>5</b>—Water Gate.<br/> <b>6</b>—Valley Gate.<br/> <b>7</b>—Gate of the Essenes.<br/> <b>8</b>—Pottery Gate.<br/> <b>9</b>—Fountain Gate.<br/> <b>10</b>—Sheep Gate.<br/> <b>11</b>—Stairs.<br/> <b>12</b>—Giants' Tower.</p> | <p><b>13</b>—Gate.<br/> <b>14</b>—Entrance.<br/> <b>15</b>—Armory.<br/> <b>16</b>—Bridge.<br/> <b>17</b>—Horse Gate.<br/> <b>18</b>—Prison Gate.<br/> <b>19</b>—Out-lying Tower.<br/> <b>20</b>—Prison.<br/> <b>21</b>—Council House.<br/> <b>22</b>—Tower of the Furnace.</p> | <p><b>23</b>—Corner Gate.<br/> <b>24</b>—Broad Wall.<br/> <b>25</b>—Ephraim Gate.<br/> <b>26</b>—Old Gate.<br/> <b>27</b>—Fish Gate.<br/> <b>28</b>—Palace of Monotazus.<br/> <b>29</b>—Women's Tower.<br/> <b>30</b>—Corner Tower.<br/> <b>31</b>—Fullers' Monument.<br/> <b>32</b>—Tower of Hannaneel.</p> | <p><b>33</b>—Palace of Monotazus.<br/> <b>34</b>—Golden Gate.<br/> <b>35</b>—Tower of Meah.<br/> <b>36</b>—Tower of Antonia.<br/> <b>37</b>—Palace of Helena.<br/> <b>38</b>—King's House.<br/> <b>39</b>—Herod's Palace.<br/> <b>40</b>—Pool of Bethesda.<br/> <b>41</b>—Pool of Silcan.<br/> <b>42</b>—Tomb of David.<br/> <b>43</b>—Pillar of Absalom.</p> |
|---|--|--|--|---|

## CHAPTER III.

**T**HEN <sup>a</sup>Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, <sup>b</sup>and they built the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it;

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 12. 10. — <sup>b</sup> John 5. 2. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 12. 39.  
<sup>d</sup> Jer. 31. 38; Zech. 14. 10.

city itself, as is common even now in Oriental cities; secondly, whether some of them were not gates leading to the temple, rather than out of the city; and, again, whether two or more of the names enumerated may not have belonged to the same gate. Indeed, it is certain that there must have been gates forming a passage between the upper and lower city; and we know that there were several on the western side of the area of the temple. There must also have been a gate and way leading, probably, from Akra to the quarter south of the temple, passing perhaps beneath the bridge. But of all those gates who can ascertain the names?

"It must, however, be borne in mind that all the accounts in the Old Testament relate to the city only as bounded on the north by the 'second wall' of Josephus. There can, of course, be no allusion to any of the gates of the subsequent third wall. Hence the suggestion, for example, that the present gate of St. Stephen may correspond to the ancient sheep gate, is wholly untenable, since apparently, until the time of Agrippa, no wall existed in that quarter.

"The chief passages relating to the gates and walls of the ancient city are found in the Book of Nehemiah, and these are occasionally illustrated by other incidental notices. It is obvious, in the account of the rebuilding of the walls by Nehemiah, that the description begins at the sheep gate, and proceeds first northwards, and so towards the left around the city, till it again terminates at the same gate. . . . The ten gates mentioned Nehemiah chap. iii are the following: the sheep gate, fish gate, old gate, valley gate, dung gate, fountain gate, water gate, horse gate, east gate, and gate Miphkad. Also in chap. xii, 39, we find the prison gate. (perhaps the same with Miphkad,) and

<sup>c</sup> even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of <sup>d</sup>Hananeel. **2** And <sup>e</sup>next unto him builded <sup>f</sup>the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri. **3** 'But

<sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *at his hand*. — <sup>2</sup> Ezra 2. 34.  
<sup>f</sup> 2 Chron. 33. 14; chap. 12. 39; Zeph. 1. 10.

the gate of Ephraim. Then, again, mention is made of the corner gate, (2 Chron. xxv, 23,) and the gate of Benjamin. Jer. xxxvii, 13. The latter is probably the same as the gate of Ephraim. Josephus mentions further the gate called Gennath, near to the tower of Hippicus, and that of the Es-senes, on the south part of the city." — Robinson.

**1. Eliashib the high priest**—He must now have been an old man. Compare Ezra x, 6, note. The *priests* seem to have built the gates and walls nearest to the temple. **Sheep gate**—This we understand from John v, 2 (where see note) to have been near the pool of Bethesda, called the "king's pool" in chap. ii, 14, and now known as the "Fountain of the Virgin," in the Kedron valley, near the southeastern corner of the city. The gate was probably so called because the sheep used in the sacrifices were brought through it into Jerusalem. **They sanctified it**—By some dedicatory service. **And set up the doors**—Raised them and hung them on their hinges, or set them in sockets or upon pivots, in which they were to turn. One gate might have several doors. **Even unto**—Here in thought we may supply the words, *they builded the walls*. They not only builded the sheep gate, but also the city wall on the eastern side as far as to the towers here mentioned. **The tower of Meah** and that of **Hananeel** must have been located in the eastern wall, but their places can only be designated by conjecture. See the plan of Jerusalem on opposite page. **They sanctified it**—Not only the tower of Meah, but their entire work.

**2. Next unto him**—That is, next adjoining the work of Eliashib and the priests. **Men of Jericho**—Same as "children of Jericho" in Ezra ii, 31. They were the returned exiles whose

the fish gate did the sons of Hassenaah build, who *also* laid the beams thereof, and <sup>2</sup>set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. **4** And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Mesheza-beel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana. **5** And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to <sup>3</sup>the work of their Lord. **6** Moreover <sup>1</sup>the old gate repaired Jehoiada the son of Paseah, and Meshullam the son of Beso-

*q* Chap. 6. 1; 7. 1.—*h* Judges 5. 23.—*i* Chap. 12. 39.—*k* Chap. 2. 8.

ancestral homes had been at Jericho, or who now were assigned to Jericho as their place of dwelling. These, like the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah in verse 7, seem to have worked on that side of the city which looked towards their places of abode.

**3. The fish gate**—Probably near the northeastern corner of the ancient city, and not far from the present gate of St. Stephen's. It was, perhaps, so called from there being a fish market near by. **Laid the beams thereof**—Framed and joined together the posts and beams. **Doors...locks...bars**—The various parts belonging to a gate. Ancient gates were often fastened by *bars*, or heavy cross-pieces of wood or iron, which made them more secure than *locks*.

**5. Tekoites**—Men whose ancestral city and present homes were Tekoah, twelve miles south of Jerusalem. See on 2 Sam. xiv, 2. **Their nobles**—The high born and wealthy among them. **Put not their necks to the work**—They seem to have thought themselves too good for such work, and this their conduct is mentioned to their shame. **Of their Lord**—Some understand this of Jehovah, others of Nehemiah. The suffix (*their*) favours the latter, though we incline to think the former is the writer's meaning.

**6. The old gate**—Its location can now be fixed only by conjecture. It seems to have been in the northern wall, and probably near the northeastern corner of the city. See plan.

**7. Meronothite**—A native or in-

deiah; they laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. **7** And next unto them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite, and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the <sup>4</sup>throne of the governor on this side the river. **8** Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of *one of* the apothecaries, and they <sup>2</sup>fortified Jerusalem unto the <sup>1</sup>broad wall. **9** And next unto them repaired Rephaiah the son of Hur, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem.

**2 Or, left Jerusalem unto the broad wall.**  
*l* Chap. 12. 35.

habitant of Meronoth, but no place of this name is now known. Compare 1 Chron. xxvii, 30. **Unto the throne of the governor**—The official residence of the Persian governor of Jerusalem. The governor of Jerusalem was one of the several officers of like character and authority on the west of the Euphrates. Comp. chap. ii, 7. *The throne* is to be understood of the seat or tribunal where the governor sat to hear cases and dispense justice, and seems to have been somewhere along or against the northern wall.

**8. Goldsmiths...apothecaries**—Representatives of whose arts seem to have always had a position among the Hebrews. They probably learned them in Egypt. *Apothecaries* are here to be understood especially of manufacturers and dealers in ointments and perfumes. Comp. Eccles. x, 1. **Fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall**—Rather, as the margin, *left Jerusalem unto the broad wall*; that is, they left off, or omitted to build a portion of the northern wall as far as to what was known as *the broad wall*. This latter was probably the wall that spanned the upper part of the Tyropæon valley, and so called from its greater breadth or thickness than other parts of the city wall.

**9. Ruler of the half part of Jerusalem**—Rather, *prince of half of the circuit of Jerusalem*. The district round Jerusalem was apparently divided into two provinces, each having its separate ruler, or prince, who held office under the governor. Some think

**10** And next unto them repaired Jedaijah the son of Harumaph, even over against his house. And next unto him repaired Hattush the son of Hashab-niah. **11** Malchijah the son of Harim, and Hashub the son of Pahath-moab, repaired the <sup>3</sup> other piece, <sup>m</sup> and the tower of the furnaces. **12** And next unto him repaired Shallum the son of Haloesh, the ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters. **13** <sup>a</sup> The valley gate repaired Hanum, and the inhabitants of Zanoah; they built it, and set up the

doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits on the wall unto <sup>o</sup> the dung gate. **14** But the dung gate repaired Malchiah the son of Rechab, the ruler of part of Beth-haccerem; he built it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. **15** But <sup>p</sup> the gate of the fountain repaired Shallun the son of Col-hozeh, the ruler of part of Mizpah; he built it, and covered it, and set up the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and the wall of the pool of <sup>q</sup> Siloah by

3 Heb. *second measure*.—*m* Chap. 12, 38.  
*n* Chap. 2, 13.

<sup>o</sup> Chapter 2, 13.—<sup>p</sup> Chapter 2, 14.  
<sup>q</sup> John 9, 7.

these two provinces or districts were representative of Judah and Benjamin.

**10. Over against his house**—Or *opposite* to his house. His house probably stood near to this part of the wall.

**11. The other piece**—Or, as the margin, *a second measure*; that is, a section of the wall next adjoining the work of Hattush. The words seem to be equivalent to *another section*. **The tower of the furnaces**—Situated on the northern wall some distance west of the "broad wall." See chap. xii, 38. What gave the tower this name is uncertain; probably a number of *furnaces*, or ovens, near by.

**12. Ruler of the half**—Compare verse 9, note. **He and his daughters**—These words may be understood in two ways: 1) of Shallum and his daughters, who assisted their father in the work; or, 2) of the half part of Jerusalem, and its towns, or villages—such dependent villages often being called the *daughters* of more princely cities. Compare the Hebrew of chap. xi, 25, 27, where the word rendered *villages* is *daughters*. This latter view we adopt. The pronoun *he* refers to **part**, which is masculine; but in English the sense would be clearer if rendered, *it and its villages*. That is, Shallum was ruler of the half part of Jerusalem, both it and its dependent villages.

**13. The valley gate**—On the west side of the city, opening into *the valley* of Gihon. See note on chapter ii, 13.

**A thousand cubits**—About 1,820 feet, which is the distance from the present tower of Hippicus to the southwestern corner of Zion. **The dung gate**, so called, no doubt, from being the place

where the filth of the city was carried out, must have stood somewhere near the southwestern corner of Zion, and was probably the same as that which Josephus (v, 4, 2) calls the gate of the Essenes.

**14. Part of Beth-haccerem**—Or, *district of Beth-haccerem*. Comp. note on verse 9. This city, which, like Jerusalem and some other cities, (comp. verses 15, 16,) had its surrounding districts with dependent towns, is mentioned also in Jer. vi, 1. It seems to have been situated not far from Tekoah, (verse 5,) south of Jerusalem, but its exact site is not determined.

**15. The gate of the fountain**—Situated near the southeastern corner of the city, and near the pool of Siloam, from which, perhaps, it took its name. See note, chap. ii, 14. **Covered it**—An expression used of no other gate. It suggests that this gate had received a more architectural finish or broader covering than others. **Wall of the pool**—This may mean the wall by which the pool itself was stoned up or inclosed, or it may mean the city wall opposite or nearest to the pool. **Siloah**—שֶׁלַח, *hash-she-lach*, *the sent*; comp.

John ix, 7, note. The pool probably received this name from the fact that its waters are *sent* down to it through a subterranean aqueduct from another pool higher up in the Kedron valley. Josephus describes the pool of Siloam as situated at the mouth of the Tyropæon valley, (v, 4, 1.) and there can be no doubt of its identity with the *Siloah* of this text, and the *Siloah* of Isa. viii, 6, the *Siloam* of John ix, 7,

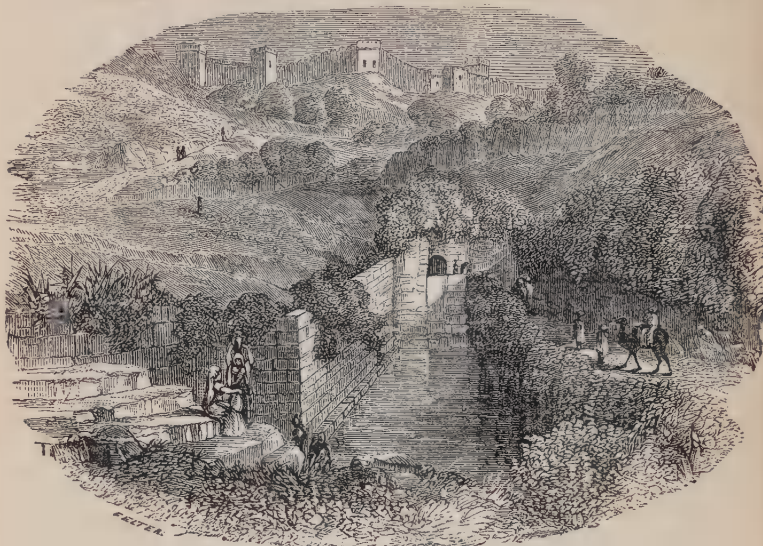
the king's garden, and unto the stairs that go down from the city of David.

**16** After him repaired Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, the ruler of the half part

*r* 2 Kings 20. 20;

of Beth-zur, unto *the place* over against the sepulchres of David, and to the pool that was made, and unto the house of the mighty. **17** After him re-

Isa. 22. 11.



The Pool of Siloam.

and the cistern still known by the same name at the southeast of Jerusalem. **By the king's garden**—This lay at the mouth of the Tyropœon, and stretched off in terraces down into the Kedron valley below. The water of Siloam runs off and is lost in this garden. *The king's garden* probably extended some distance down the Kedron valley beyond its junction with the valley of Hinnom. Robinson speaks of "the small oblong plain there formed," as now "covered with an olive grove, and with the traces of former gardens extending down the valley from the present gardens of Siloam. Indeed, this whole spot is the prettiest and most fertile around Jerusalem." **The stairs that go down from the city of David**—Tristram identifies these stairs with a series of steps recently discovered at the southwest corner of Zion, but the order followed by the

sacred writer should lead us rather to look for them on the eastern side of Zion, leading down towards the pool of Siloam. Their exact locality, however, is doubtful.

**16. Over against the sepulchres of David**—David and most of his sons who reigned after him were buried "in the city of David." 1 Kings ii, 10; xiv, 31; xv, 8; xxiv, 22, 50. The site of this royal sepulchre is not known, but an uncertain tradition associates it with an ancient church on Zion, now known as the mosque of the tomb of David. The sepulchres being "in the city of David," must have been somewhere on Zion, and hence we may infer that the repairs of the **Nehemiah** of this verse were upon a wall that ran northward along the eastern brow of Zion, and was one of the "two walls" mentioned in 2 Kings xxv, 4, and Isa. xxii, 11. **The pool that was made**

paired the Levites, Rehun the son of Bani. Next unto him repaired Hashabiah, the ruler of the half part of Keilah, in his part. **18** After him repaired their brethren, Bavai the son of Henadad, the ruler of the half part of Keilah. **19** And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armoury at the "turning of the wall." **20** After him Baruch the son of <sup>4</sup>Zab-bai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning of the wall unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. **21** After him repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah the son of Koz

82 Chron. 26. 9.—4 Or, *Zaccabai*.

—Not the pool of Hezekiah, (2 Kings xx, 20,) for that was near the north-west corner of the city; nor the pool of Siloam, for this could hardly be referred to in this manner after the mention of it in verse 15; nor the king's pool, for that was not opposite or near to David's sepulchre; but probably the "ditch [Hebrew, *reservoir*] between the two walls" mentioned in Isa. xxii, 11. **House of the mighty**—Probably a tower or small castle built on the wall, and formerly used as the station and headquarters of the king's *mighty* men—such, for instance, as were David's pride. Compare 2 Sam. xxiii, 8.

**17. Keilah**—Situated about five miles northwest of Hebron, and some fifteen southwest of Jerusalem. See Josh. xv, 44; 1 Sam. xxiii, 1. **In his part**—That is, for his district. He represented the *part* of Keilah which he governed, just as Bavai represented, as mentioned in the next verse, the other half of Keilah.

**18. Their brethren**—Brethren of those mentioned in the previous verse, whom Hashabiah represented.

**19. Another piece**—The next section of the wall adjoining that repaired by the men of Keilah. Comp. note on verse 11. **The going up to the armoury**—The ascent of ground where the *armoury*, or arsenal, was situated. The exact localities here mentioned cannot now be even plausibly conjectured. So utterly has Jerusalem been "trodden down of the Gentiles" since the works here described were wrought, that no traces of them now

remain. **20** After him repaired Benjamin and Hashub over against their house. After him repaired Azariah the son of Maaseiah the son of Ananiah by his house. **24** After him repaired Binnui the son of Henadad another piece, from the house of Azariah unto "the turning of the wall, even unto the corner." **25** Paltai the son of Uzai, over against the turning of the wall, and the tower which lieth out from the king's high house, that was by the "court of the prison.

t Verse 19.—u Jer. 32, 2; 33, 1; 37, 21.

remain. **The turning of the wall** was probably some angle or curve which it took near the *armoury*, so that it would bring the place where the arms were kept somewhere near the northeastern corner of Zion.

**20. Earnestly repaired**—Being filled with holy zeal, he strove to emulate and rival his fellow-builders. **House of Eliashib**—This probably adjoined the temple enclosure, and from the next verse would seem to have been of considerable extent.

**22. Men of the plain**—Men whose residence was in the plains of Jericho or Jordan. ככר, here rendered *plain*, is frequently applied to the lower end of the Jordan valley. Gen. xiii, 10-12; xix, 17; 2 Sam. xviii, 23; 1 Kings vii, 46.

**24. The turning...the corner**—These points seem to have belonged either to the wall of the temple enclosure, or to that which separated the upper from the lower city; but all attempts to locate them precisely must be purely conjectural.

**25. The tower...king's high house...court of the prison**—These are also unknown. *The king's high house* seems most naturally to designate the great palace of Solomon, which stood at the south of the temple area, commanding the slope of Ophel. See note at the beginning of 1 Kings vii. But in the time of Nehemiah, more than a century after that ancient palace had been laid in ruins, the name may have been given to some other royal house. Hence all attempts to

After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh. **26** Moreover <sup>v</sup>the Nethinim <sup>d</sup>dwelt in <sup>w</sup>Ophel, unto *the place* over against <sup>x</sup>the water gate toward the east, and the tower that lieth out. **27** After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel. **28** From above the <sup>y</sup>horse gate repaired the priests, every one over against his house. **29** After them repaired Zadok the son of Immer over against his house. After him repaired also Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah,

<sup>v</sup> Ezra 2. 43; chap. 11. 21.—<sup>d</sup> Or, which *dwelt* in Ophel, repaired unto.—<sup>w</sup> 2 Chron. 27. 1; 1. 37.—<sup>x</sup> Or, *The tower*.

designate its exact location are at best conjectural.

**26. Dwelt in Ophel**—Ophel is the name of the sloping ridge that runs down, south of the temple area, between the mouth of the Tyropœon and the valley of Kedron, and ends in a rocky bluff just above the pool of Siloam. **The water gate toward the east** is an expression so obscure as to baffle any plausible conjecture as to its locality. According to chap. viii. 1, 3, it faced the street in which the people assembled to hear the law read and expounded, and hence could not well have been a gate in the outer wall of the city, near the present golden gate, as Bertheau thinks. The mention again of **the tower that lieth out**, leads rather to the opinion that *the water gate* was also in the vicinity of the bridge over the Tyropœon, perhaps in the western wall of the temple area.

**27. Tekoites repaired another piece**—In addition to what they had done on the outer wall. Verse 5. **The great tower that lieth out** was apparently a tower noted for its great size, or height, and not identified with the one mentioned in the two preceding verses. It seems to have been connected with **the wall of Ophel**, which latter was identical with, or a continuation of, that on which Jotham and Manasseh had built. See 2 Chron. xxvii. 3, xxxiii. 14, notes.

**28. The horse gate**—So called, probably, from being the entrance to the royal stables. Compare marginal references. Its exact location can now be only a matter of conjecture.

the keeper of the east gate. **30** After him repaired Hananiah the son of Shel-emiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zaphan, another piece. After him repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah over against his chamber. **31** After him repaired Malchiah the goldsmith's son unto the place of the Nethinim, and of the merchants, over against the gate Miphkad, and to the <sup>7</sup>going up of the corner. **32** And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.

<sup>x</sup> Chapter 8. 1, 3; 12. 37.—<sup>y</sup> 2 Kings 11. 16; 2 Chronicles 23. 15; Jeremiah 31. 40.—<sup>7</sup> Or, *corner chamber*.

**29. Keeper of the east gate**—This does not imply that *the east gate* was anywhere near the wall which **Shemaiah** repaired. The expression naturally designates some gate in the eastern wall of the city.

**31. Place of the Nethinim**—That is, Ophel, the place where they dwelt. Verse 26. **And of the merchants**—Who, probably, kept a sort of bazaar on the western slope of Ophel, near the bridge that crossed the Tyropœon. **Gate Miphkad**—Or, *gate of numbering*; so called, perhaps, because the census of the people was taken here. Or it may mean *gate of reviewing*, that is, *of judgment*, because cases were tried here, and the judgment rendered. It was, perhaps, situated in the southern wall of the temple enclosure, and near "the court of the prison," (ver. 25.) an appropriate place for rendering judgment. **The going up of the corner**—Or the words may mean, as the margin has it, the *corner chamber*, referring, perhaps, to an upper chamber at the southwest corner of the temple enclosure. We incline to think, however, that *the corner* referred to is that of the outer city wall, just above the pool of Siloam.

**32. The corner unto the sheep gate**—That is, from the southeast corner of the outer wall northward to the point whence the writer's description started. Verse 1. Thus the description of the rebuilding of the walls has passed entirely round the city, and also noticed the repairing of inner walls which separated one part of the city from the other. The last section

## CHAPTER IV.

**B**UT it came to pass, \* that when Sanballat heard that we build the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews. **2** And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned? **3** Now **T**obiah the Ammonite was by him, and

*a* Chap. 2, 10, 19. — *b* 1 Sam. 14, 11, 12; Zech. 12, 8; 1 Cor. 1, 27. — *1* Heb. *leave to themselves*. — *c* Chap. 2, 10, 19.

was repaired by the goldsmiths and the merchants, probably because they had their dwellings and business in this quarter of the city.

## CHAPTER IV.

TROUBLES FROM THE SAMARITANS,  
1-23.

**1. Sanballat**—See on chap. ii, 10. **That we build the wall**—That is, that we were building it. This chapter describes events that transpired while their work of rebuilding was going on. **Took great indignation**—He was irritated and provoked, for he hated the thought of having the Jews prosper. **Mocked**—He tried to scoff at what he secretly feared.

**2. His brethren**—His associates in office. **The army of Samaria**—Of which he seems to have been the chief commander. **Will they fortify themselves**—Literally, *Will they leave to them?* The meaning is not clear, but seems most naturally brought out if we allow the verb a passive sense: *Shall they be left to themselves?* This is the thought conveyed both by the Septuagint and Vulgate, although those versions present no literal translation of the Hebrew. The Septuagint has the following: "Is this the power of Samaria, that these Jews build their city?" Vulgate: "Shall the nations let them go?" that is, shall the surrounding nations let them go on with their building their city walls? **Will they sacrifice**—Will they presume to renew and perpetuate their ancient cultus? **Make an end in a day**—

VOL. IV.—29

he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. **4** **Hear, O our God**; for we are despised: and **turn** their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity: **5** And **cover** not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders. **6** So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work. **7** But it

*d* Psa. 123, 3, 4. — *2* Heb. *despite*. — *e* Psa. 79, 12; Prov. 3, 34. — *f* Psa. 69, 27, 28; 103, 14, 15; Jer. 18, 23.

Do they imagine they can so speedily rebuild their city that no one will find it out before it is complete? **Revive the stones**—He speaks of the great stones of Jerusalem as having been destroyed by fire, broken, and ruined, so that the attempt of a feeble band of exiles to restore them (Heb., *make them live*) from their **heaps of . . . rubbish** was to his mind the height of folly.

**3. Tobiah**—See on chapter ii, 10. **If a fox go up**—Thus Tobiah adds derision and contempt to Sanballat's pitying scorn.

**4. Hear, O our God**—The bitter scorn and derision of the enemy causes Nehemiah to break out with an imprecatory prayer. **Turn their reproach**—Let them fall under the reproach and scorn that now afflict us. **A prey in the land of captivity**—Bring them to suffer violence and abuse in captivity. *The land of captivity* is to be understood of any land in which the persons referred to might dwell as captives.

**5. Cover not**—That is, forgive not; do not pardon. **Let not their sin be blotted out**—All these imprecations of Nehemiah are to be understood and explained, like the imprecatory psalms, as the voice of down-trodden humanity and injured innocence uttering by a divine inspiration the judgments of righteousness upon the wicked oppressor. Such psalms as the one hundred and twenty-third and the one hundred and twenty-fourth were probably written on this occasion.

**6. Unto the half thereof**—That is, until it was half completed. Some

G. T.

came to pass, *that* <sup>a</sup> when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem <sup>b</sup> were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth, ■ And <sup>c</sup> conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and <sup>d</sup> to hinder it. 9 Nevertheless <sup>e</sup> we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night,

<sup>a</sup> Verse 1.—<sup>b</sup> Heb. *ascended*.—<sup>c</sup> Psalm 83. 3-5.—<sup>d</sup> Heb. *to make an error to it*.—<sup>e</sup> 2 Psa. 50. 15.

understand this of half way around the city, others of half the height of the wall. The latter seems to be the true meaning, inasmuch as the work was going on at all points in the city at the same time, so that the workmen were greatly scattered. Verse 19. So, also, the previous chapter shows that the different families or classes of the people had each a distinct portion of the work, so that the rebuilding of the wall would be prosecuted on all sides at the same time.

7. **The Arabians**—Headed probably by Geshem. See on chapter ii. 19. **Ashdodites**—Inhabitants of Ashdod, one of the great cities of the Philistine plain. It was besieged and captured by the Assyrians in the time of Sargon, (Isaiah xx, 1,) but had so far recovered its strength as now to enter into confederacy with the Samaritans against the Jews. **That the walls ... were made up**—Literally, *That there arose healing to the walls*. The broken walls are spoken of as wounded, and the rebuilding was a healing, or restoring them to health. The thought is amplified by the additional clause, **the breaches began to be stopped**—Places where the wall had been violently broken through were closed up.

8. **To come...to fight...to hinder**—None of these purposes, however, seem to have been carried out by the conspiring parties. The Hebrew here for *hinder*, is, literally *to do to it a disturbance*.

9. **Made our prayer...and set a watch**—Here watching and prayer were strikingly exemplified. "The strongest confidence in the protection

because of them. 10 And Judah said, <sup>a</sup> The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and *there is* much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall. 11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease. 12 And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, <sup>b</sup> From all places

<sup>a</sup> E Num. 13. 31; 32. 9; Psa. 11. 1, 2; Hagai 1. 2.—<sup>b</sup> Or, *That from all places ye must return to us*.

and favour of God does not preclude the use of all or any of the means of self-preservation and defence which his providence has put in our power."—Clarke.

10. **Judah said**—By his representatives, heads of the tribe of Judah. **The strength... is decayed**—They are worn-out and exhausted by excessive toil. **Much rubbish**—This had been accumulating for more than a hundred years, and in some places presented to the builders insuperable difficulties.

11. **They shall not know**—They plotted a secret assault, aiming to surprise the Jews in the midst of their work.

12. **Jews which dwelt by them**—That is, Jews who dwelt among the Samaritans and other enemies, and by that means found out their evil designs. **Said unto us ten times**—Thereby showing their intense anxiety. The expression is equivalent to a *great many times*, or *again and again*. **From all places whence ye shall return unto us**—Something seems to have fallen out of the text here. The words supplied by our translators, **they will be upon you**, do not fully clear up the obscurity, nor suit the previous words, *whence ye shall return*. Bertheau literally translates the Hebrew thus.—*From all places that ye return to us*; and explains it as the request of the kinsmen and friends of those builders whose homes were in places some distance from Jerusalem, (like the men of Jericho, Tekoa, and Gibeon, chap. iii, 2, 5, 7,) to tarry no longer in danger at Jerusalem, but return to them. This, too, is the natural meaning of the marginal reading, *that from all places ye*

whence ye shall return unto us *they will be upon you*. **13** Therefore set I <sup>a</sup> in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows. **14** And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, <sup>b</sup> Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, *which is* <sup>m</sup> great and

terrible, and <sup>a</sup> fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. **15** And it came to pass, when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, <sup>a</sup> and God had brought their counsel to nought, that we returned all of us to the wall, every one unto his work. **16** And it came to pass from that time forth, *that* the half of my servants wrought in the work,

<sup>6</sup> Heb. *from the lower parts of the place*, etc.  
<sup>b</sup> Num. 14. 9; Deut. 1. 29.

<sup>m</sup> Deuteronomy 10. 17.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Samuel 10. 12.  
<sup>o</sup> Job 5. 12.

*must return to us*. We take this to be the true meaning. The Jews who dwelt at a distance from Jerusalem were anxious to have their friends and kinsmen there return to their homes and families. Interpreters have too generally assumed that these words contained the information which the Jews from a distance brought to the rulers at Jerusalem; whereas, they are rather a request of those Jews for their relatives to leave the imperilled city, and thus escape the threatening danger. Exactly how the rulers at Jerusalem were informed of their enemies' designs is not said, but, doubtless, it came through those Jews who dwelt among the enemy.

**13. Set I**—Or, *then I stationed*, to wit, people, as is seen further on. **In the lower places**—Better, as the margin, *from, or at, the lower parts of the place*. That is, he stationed men at the lower parts of the city, where there was special danger and greater exposure. **Behind the wall**—To defend it, and prevent the enemy from entering the city at those points. *The wall* thus served as a fortification. **And on the higher places**—The *and* should be omitted, and the rest rendered *in the exposed parts*. This phrase is not, as the English version makes it, the opposite of the *lower places*, but relates to *behind the wall*. He stationed men *behind the wall in the exposed places*. **I even set**—This is a repetition of the first words of the verse, and followed immediately by the object of the verb. **The people**—All the inhabitants of the city. They were distributed into the various parts of the city, especially in the lower and more exposed parts, so that all

the place was under guard. **After their families**—Rather, *according to families*. The people were distributed by family groups, so that the men that guarded any particular part of the wall had their families and kinsmen nearest them. **Swords . . . spears . . . bows**—These were not the only kinds of weapons with which they were provided. See verse 16.

**14. I looked**—To see if all my orders had been carried out. **Rose up**—To pass around and address the nobles and others with words of encouragement and cheer.

**15. God had brought their counsel to nought**—Observe the doctrine of Providence here. The betrayal of the enemies' designs, and the preparations for defence, though all wrought out by human instrumentalities, are attributed to God. **We returned all of us to the wall**—That is, as is immediately explained, **every one unto his work**. For a time they merely watched, and stood in readiness to resist the enemy that proposed to assail them unawares, (verse 11;) but now they return to their work again, not, however, without some change in their manner of procedure, as the next verse tells.

**16. The half of my servants**—Nehemiah may, as governor of the people and superintendent of the work, speak here of all the people who laboured on the wall as his *servants*; but verse 23 shows that he had also his own proper *servants* engaged in the work. As the king of Persia had provided him with captains and horsemen, (chap. ii, 9,) so also had he, probably, furnished him with servants. From that time forth one half stood guard while the other

and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers *were* behind all the house of Judah. **17** They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, *every one* with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other *hand* held a weapon. **18** For the builders, every one had his sword girded <sup>7</sup> by his side, and *so* builded. And he that sounded the trumpet *was* by me. **19** And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers,

7 Hebrew, *on his loins*.—p Exodus 14. 14, 25;

half wrought in the work. The other half of them held . . . the spears—There is, at first sight, some confusion here. According to verse 17, every labourer held a missile weapon in one hand and worked with the other; and according to verse 18, every one had also his sword girded by his side; but according to this verse one half of the people held the weapons while the other half worked on the wall. We think that verse 17 is to be explained (in view of the more controlling statements of this verse and verse 21) as a figurative or proverbial representation of the anxious watchfulness and care of all the people to prevent surprise by the enemy. **Habergeons**—Corselets, or coats of mail. See note on 1 Sam. xvii. 5. **The rulers were behind**—That is, in the rear of the people, who were stationed at different places along the wall. They would naturally take this position the better to oversee and direct both the watch and the work. **All the house of Judah** is here used for the whole body of the people, who were composed principally of members of the tribe of Judah.

**17. With one of his hands wrought . . . with the other hand held a weapon**—This seems to be a figurative expression to denote the constant readiness of the builders to rush at once to battle in case of sudden attack. Every one had his weapons at hand, ready for use at a moment's warning. The word for *weapon* שֵׁלַח means properly a missile—something that can be hurled or thrown.

**18. Every one had his sword girded by his side**—This was prob-

ably literally the case. *Swords* are not mentioned in verse 16 as among the arms held in readiness by the half of the people that watched while the others worked. Swords could be worn so as not greatly to hinder the workmen in their work.

**20** In what place *therefore* ye hear the sound of the trumpet, resort ye thither unto us: <sup>9</sup> our God shall fight for us. **21** So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. **22** Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a

Deuteronomy 1. 30; 3. 22; 20. 4; Joshua 23. 10.

ably literally the case. *Swords* are not mentioned in verse 16 as among the arms held in readiness by the half of the people that watched while the others worked. Swords could be worn so as not greatly to hinder the workmen in their work.

**19. We are separated**—Being grouped by families at the more exposed places along the city wall. See on verse 13. Hence the necessity of having a concerted signal to call them together in case of attack.

**21. Half of them held the spears**—This confirms our view of verse 16, that half stood on guard, with arms ready for the use of all, while the other half worked. They, doubtless, relieved each other by turns.

**22. Every one**—Every leading man, or head of a family. **With his servant**—Rather, *and his servant*. As Nehemiah, being head of the entire community, might have called all the people his servants, (verse 16,) so every leading man had also those under him whom he commanded. But each leading man of the Jews may also have had his own private servants. Some of the more wealthy had brought their own brethren of the Jews virtually into bondage to them. Chap. v, 5, 8. **Lodge within Jerusalem**—And not in the neighbouring villages, as some of them had been accustomed to do. **They may be a guard**—Namely, the men and the servants just named. They were to stay and do their share in guarding the city, as well as in labouring on its walls. But as the next verse shows, they were not the only ones that thus watched and laboured.

guard to us, and labour on the day. **23** So neither <sup>a</sup>I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, <sup>a</sup>*saving that every one put them off for washing.*

<sup>a</sup> Chapter 5. 16; 7. 2; Judges 9. 48.—8 Or, *every one went with his weapon for water;*

It was necessary to the safety of Jerusalem that a large and strong watch be maintained night and day, and it was too much for Nehemiah and the rest, whose homes were in the city, to do all this. Hence the justice of requiring those whose homes were in neighbouring towns to abide for the present in the city, and do a proper share of guarding the great common interests of all. **To us**—Nehemiah and all who dwelt in the city.

**23. Nor my brethren**—Men of his own tribe and near kinsmen. **Nor my servants**—See note on versè 16. **Nor the men of the guard which followed me**—This may refer to the persons mentioned in the preceding verse, who were retained in Jerusalem as a guard; or to a special body-guard of Nehemiah, composed of the captains and horsemen who came up with him from Persia, (chap. ii, 9,) and still followed him, or were behind him, to do his bidding. **None of us put off our clothes**—Such was their constant wakefulness and watchfulness. **Saving that every one put them off for washing**—Such is the meaning which the Vulgate and a number of expositors put upon the Hebrew, **אִישׁ שָׁלְחוֹ הַמַּיִם**. But these words contain in themselves no such meaning, and there is reason to suspect a corruption in the text. Literally, they read, *a man, his weapon, the waters*, and there is no connective to decide the meaning. The following are the principal conjectures: 1. That *waters* here are to be taken as a euphemism for a call of nature, and the sense is, that every man kept his weapons by him even when attending to a call of nature. 2. The marginal reading, that every one who went for water to the springs or wells carried his weapon along. 3. Instead of **הַמַּיִם**, *the waters*,

## CHAPTER V.

**A**ND there was a great <sup>a</sup>cry of the people and of their wives against their <sup>b</sup>brethren the Jews. **2** For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, *are many*: therefore we take

see Judges 5. 11.—<sup>a</sup> Isaiah 5. 7.—<sup>b</sup> Leviticus 25. 35-37; Deuteronomy 15. 7.

we should read **בְּיָדוֹ**, *in his hand*. Then it would smoothly read, *every one (having) his weapon in his hand*. 4. Instead of **הַמַּיִם**, read **הַמִּיְנוֹ**, *his right*, when the sense would be, *every one with his weapon on his right*; that is, ready for immediate action in case of attack. This variety of conjectures sufficiently indicates that some connectives must have fallen out of the text.

## CHAPTER V.

## REFORMING OF ABUSES, 1-13.

1. **A great cry**—The outcry of poverty, oppression, and abuse. **Against . . . brethren**—So there were troubles and abuses among themselves, as well as from their enemies.

2. **There were that said**—These seem to have been persons who held about the civil *status* of the Roman proletaries, who owned no property, but served the state with their children, and procured a livelihood by labouring for others. These were the lowest class of citizens. **Our sons, and our daughters, are many**—That which was to the true Israelite the highest gratification and pleasure—a pledge that Jehovah's blessing was with him—was in this case the occasion of oppression and sorrow. **We take up corn for them**—The words *for them* should be omitted. To *take up corn*, means to receive or obtain it, not by violence, but by some specific arrangement with the wealthier classes who had corn to sell. How these poorer classes obtained their corn is not said, but the most natural inference is, (compare verses 5, 8.) that they sold themselves and their children as bond-servants to the richer Jews, according to the provisions of the law. Exod. xxi, 7; Lev. xxv, 39. **That we may eat, and live**—Better, thought they, are food and life in bondage, than starvation and death in freedom.

up corn for them, that we may eat, and live. **3** Some also there were that said, 'We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. **4** There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. **5** Yet now 'our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we 'bring into bondage our sons

c Gen. 47. 15; Lev. 25. 35, 39; Deut. 15. 7. —d Isa. 58. 7. —e Exod. 21. 7; Lev. 25. 39.

**3. Also there were**—Another class higher than those of verse 2, for they were the owners of **lands, vineyards, and houses**. These had brought themselves into distress by mortgaging or pledging their property for food. **Because of the dearth**—Literally, *in the famine*. This famine or scarcity may have been occasioned, not by a pestilence or barrenness of their lands, but because so many of the people had been called from their homes to labour on the wall, and thus had failed to sow and reap their fields. The neighbouring nations, also, being hostile towards them, would be likely to hinder the importation of provisions from a distance.

**4. We have borrowed money for the king's tribute**—These represent a third class, whose **lands and vineyards** seem to have afforded them food for their personal wants, but not *money* with which to pay the taxes assessed upon them. The princes and wealthier men among the Jews took advantage of this impoverishment of their poorer brethren to exact exorbitant and unlawful interest upon the money they loaned them. Verse 7. This was expressly forbidden in the law. Exod. xxii, 25; Deut. xxiii, 19. But to obtain this *money* these persons also had to mortgage or pledge their *lands and vineyards*. These last two nouns are to be construed, grammatically, as accusatives after *borrowed*, which verb has not only the sense of *borrowing* something, but also of *pledging* something for that which is borrowed.

**5. Our flesh is as . . . our brethren**—Having separately stated their several grievances, they now unitedly urge

and our daughters to be servants, and *some of our daughters are brought into bondage already*: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards. **6** And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. **7** Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, 'Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them.

1 Heb. *my heart consulted in me*. —f Exod. 22. 25; Lev. 25. 36; Ezek. 22. 12.

the common oppressiveness of them all. They are all one race, descendants of a common sire, and, therefore, *brethren*—of the same flesh and blood. **Bring into bondage . . . to be servants**—Literally, *tread down to servants*; that is, subject to the condition of slaves. The law allowed such sale of children. See Exod. xxi, 7; Lev. xxv, 39. **Some of our daughters**—The subjection of these weaker and more helpless ones to the condition of bondmaids is emphasized as something specially severe. **Neither is it in our power to redeem them**—Literally, *and nothing to the power of our hand, or, nothing of power [is in] our hand*, ḥ having here its genitive, or possessive sense. The word ḥ, here rendered *power*, is commonly rendered *God*, and Bertheau translates and explains the words thus: *And not to the God is our hand*; that is, we have not the power, as that of a God, to change or put an end to our wretched condition. But the more natural and simple meaning is that given above; these oppressed ones had no power to help themselves. Comp. the same expression in Gen. xxxi, 29; Deut. xxviii, 32; Prov. iii, 27; Micah ii, 1.

**6. Very angry**—Highly indignant, to find that such abuses existed among a people so recently escaped from exile.

**7. I consulted with myself**—He would do nothing rashly, but carefully devise and adopt the wisest measures to reform these abuses. **Rebuked**—Contended with them; strove with them by words, as the following sentences show. **Nobles . . . rulers**—See note on chap. ii, 16. **Ye exact usury**—Demand exorbitant and unlawful in-

8 And I said unto them, We, after our ability, have \*redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer. 9 Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk <sup>h</sup>in the fear of our God <sup>i</sup>because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? 10 I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us <sup>k</sup>leave off this usury. 11 Restore, I

<sup>g</sup> Lev. 25. 48. — <sup>h</sup> Lev. 25. 36. — <sup>i</sup> 2 Sam. 12. 14; Rom. 2. 24; 1 Pet. 2. 12. — <sup>k</sup> Verse 7; Exod. 22.

terest. This the law strictly prohibited. See Exod. xxii, 25; Lev. xxv, 36; Deut. xxiii, 19. **I set a great assembly against them**—That is, assembled a great congregation of the people to sit in judgment on the deeds of the usurers.

8. **We**—Nehemiah and other nobles and influential Jews before him, who had been instrumental in procuring the release of the Jews from captivity and permission for them to return to Judea and restore their fallen state. **After our ability**—Literally, *according to the sufficiency in us*. Nehemiah and others had used official position and personal influence, which they held with the kings of Persia, to secure the deliverance of their brethren the Jews from their exile among the heathen. **Will ye even sell your brethren**—Will ye now take advantage of their poverty to involve them into slavery among their own nation and race?

9. **Walk in the fear of our God**—Have all your conduct show reverence for God, and fear to break his laws. **Because of the reproach of the heathen**—That is, lest ye make yourselves an occasion of reproach among the heathen, and they say: These Jews despise their own laws by oppressing their own brethren.

10. **I likewise**—Nehemiah, like the true God-fearing ruler, conscious of integrity and honour, pleads his own example as one worthy of his people's notice. **My brethren, and my servants**—See notes on chap. iv, 16, 23. **Might exact**—Nehemiah and those whom he associates with himself had

pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth *part* of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.

12 Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them: so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. 13 Also <sup>m</sup>I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise,

25. 27; Psal. 15. 5; Ezek. 18. 8, 13. — <sup>n</sup> Ezra 10. 5. Jer. 34. 8, 9. — <sup>m</sup> Matt. 10. 14; Acts 13. 51; 18. 6.

the same opportunity to oppress their poor brethren by usury as they, but he assumes that such action would grossly unfit him and them for the position they occupied.

11. **Restore...this day**—Wrongs cannot be too speedily righted. **The hundredth part**—This is commonly supposed to mean one per cent. paid monthly, thus corresponding with the Roman *centesimæ usuræ*, or twelve per cent. per annum. We know not what rate of interest was legal among the Jews. It is said that the laws of Menu allow eighteen and even twenty-four per cent. This *hundredth part*, which these usurers were required to restore, may have been only the excess of the legal rate.

12. **We will...require nothing of them**—They volunteer now not only to restore what they had taken unlawfully, but even to take no interest at all. They will try to make some amends for past wrongs by relinquishing all claims even for legal interest. **I called the priests**—To witness the oath of the offenders, and also to give dignity and solemnity to the occasion. Compare Deut. xvii, 8-10; 2 Chron. xix, 8-10.

13. **Shook my lap**—Or, *shook my bosom*; that is, the bosom of my garment. This was a symbolical act to designate, as Nehemiah immediately explains, the casting out from the covenant people those who performeth not this promise. The person using this sign gathered up his garment in his bosom, intimating that there was the seat of confidence and

even thus be he shaken out, and <sup>2</sup> emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praise the Lord. <sup>3</sup> And the people did according to this promise.

**14** Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year <sup>4</sup> even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that is*, twelve years, I and my brethren have not <sup>5</sup> eaten the bread of the governor.

**15** But the former governors that *had been* before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of sil-

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *empty*, or, *void*.—<sup>n</sup> 2 Kings 23. 8.—<sup>o</sup> Chap. 13. 6.—<sup>p</sup> 1 Cor. 9. 4, 15.—<sup>q</sup> 2 Cor. 11. 9:

trust, and then, shaking it out, he represented the utter casting off and disowning of any that would violate such a solemn pledge. **The people did—**They kept their **promise** by restoring all they had taken from their brethren.

#### NEHEMIAH'S EXAMPLE OF SELF-DENIAL, 14-18.

**14. The time that I was appointed... governor—**This was in the **twentieth year of Artaxerxes**, the same year in which he was sent up from Shushan the palace. Compare chap. i, 1; ii, 1. **Have not eaten the bread of the governor—**Have not received the customary salary and support which it is usual for a governor to receive of his people, and which he might have justly claimed. Compare the similar example of Paul. 2 Cor. xi, 7, 9.

**15. Were chargeable unto the people—**Literally, *made heavy upon the people*; that is, had made themselves burdensome. **Besides forty shekels of silver—**This, we think, gives substantially the meaning of the Hebrew, which is more exactly rendered thus: *had taken from them in bread and wine after forty shekels of silver*. That is, after having received their salary of forty shekels (about \$22) a day, (so the Vulgate,) they also took of the people gifts of bread and wine. **Their servants bare rule—**They copied the example of their masters, and also assumed power to lord it over the people. Bitterly oppressed are any people over whom servants rule

ver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but <sup>6</sup> so did not I, because of the <sup>7</sup> fear of God. **16** Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants *were* gathered thither unto the work. **17** Moreover *there were* <sup>8</sup> at my table a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, besides those that came unto us from among the heathen that *were* about us. **18** Now *that* <sup>9</sup> which was prepared for me daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this <sup>10</sup> required

12, 13.—<sup>r</sup> Verse 9.—<sup>s</sup> 2 Sam. 9. 7; 1 Kings 18. 19.—<sup>t</sup> 1 Kings 4. 22.—<sup>u</sup> Verses 14, 15.

Compare Lam. v, 8. **Because of the fear of God—**Because of Nehemiah's reverence for God.

**16. Neither bought we any land—**By taking advantage of the distress of the people, as the nobles and rulers had done. Comp. verse 10, note. **My servants... unto the work—**And were not allowed to tyrannize over the people. Compare verse 15.

**17. At my table—**As courtly guests. Here was a great expense, which his official position involved, but which he would not tax the people to bear. **Jews and rulers—**Holding official relations to the government, and so belonging to the court of the governor. **Those that came unto us from among the heathen—**Ambassadors and persons on official business, who would, of course, be entertained at the governor's table.

**18. That which was prepared for me daily—**To show what a burden he bore at his own expense, Nehemiah here mentions a few of the more important items that were *daily* required for his table. Yet to maintain all this he made no claim for official salary and expense, but met all himself through sympathy with the distressed populace and the cause of his God. Clarke here quotes Pococke's description of "the manner in which the Bey of Tunis lived. He had daily twelve sheep, with fish, fowls, soups, oranges, onions, boiled rice, etc. His nobles dined with him; after they had done, the servants sat down, and when they had finished the poor took what was left." **Once in**

not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people. **19** <sup>a</sup>Think upon me, my God, for good, <sup>b</sup>according to all that I have done for this people.

## CHAPTER VI.

**N**OW it came to pass, <sup>a</sup>when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and <sup>b</sup>Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and <sup>c</sup>that there was no breach left therein; (<sup>b</sup> though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;) **2** That Sanballat and Geshem <sup>c</sup>sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in *some*

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 13. 32.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 2. 10, 19; 4. 1, 7.—  
<sup>1</sup> Or, *Gashmu*, verse 6.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 3. 1, 3.—  
<sup>c</sup> Prov. 26. 24, 25.

**ten days . . . wine**—Wine could be obtained in quantities, and kept for any length of time, but other provisions must be furnished every day.

**19. Think upon me, my God, for good**—The prayer of conscious innocence and self-sacrifice, such as any pure and lofty soul might naturally write down in his diary, if he were beset with the difficulties that surrounded Nehemiah.

## CHAPTER VI.

MORE TROUBLES FROM THE ENEMY,  
1-19.

**1. Upon the gates**—Rather, *in the gates*. The frame-work and walls of the gates were, of course, completed before the **doors** of the gates were set up. The setting up of the doors mentioned in chapter iii, 1, 3, 6, etc., does not contradict this verse, for that chapter is devoted to an account of the various builders, and the work assigned to each; while chapters iv, v, and vi, narrate events which transpired while the building was going on, and before it was all complete.

**2. Let us meet**—For conference. **Plain of Ono**—Probably the same as "the Valley of Craftsmen," in chapter xi, 35; some depression or torrent-bed close by *Ono*, in which that and other **villages** seem to have been located. *Ono* and *Lod* were Benjamite towns, built by Elpaal or by one of his sons. 1 Chron. viii, 12. The Talmudists locate these towns three miles apart,

*one* of the villages in the plain of <sup>a</sup>*Ono*. But they <sup>a</sup>thought to do me mischief. **3** And I sent messengers unto them, saying, 'I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?' **4** Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner. **5** Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand; **6** Wherein *was* written, It is reported among the heathen, and <sup>a</sup>*Gashmu* saith it, <sup>b</sup>*that* thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that

<sup>d</sup> 1 Chron. 8. 12; Chap. 11. 35.—<sup>e</sup> Psal. 37. 12, 32.—  
<sup>f</sup> Eccles. 9. 10.—<sup>2</sup> Or, *Geshem*, verse 1.—  
<sup>g</sup> Chap. 2. 19.

and the modern village Kefr Ana, about five miles north of Lydda, is, perhaps, the representative of the ancient *Ono*. **Thought to do me mischief**—Designed either to assassinate him or take him prisoner.

**3. Why should the work cease**—Though Nehemiah saw through their foul designs he was too wise to utter his suspicions, and maintained a noble dignity of reserve. His answer to them also contains a most consummate hint of their low plotting. "I know not any language," says Dr. A. Clarke, "which a man who is employed on important labours can use more suitably as an answer to the thousand invitations and provocations he may have to remit his work, enter into useless or trivial conferences, or notice weak, wicked, and malicious attacks on his work and his motives: 'I am doing a great work, so I cannot stoop to your nonsense or notice your malevolence. Why should the work cease while I leave it, and come down to such as you?'"

**5. With an open letter**—Having failed in all his secret and crafty measures to entrap Nehemiah, Sanballat now proceeds to treat him with contempt and insult, and sends him *an open letter*, that any one may read. This he probably thought would terrify him, or excite the people against him.

**6. Gashmu saith it**—He was one of the most malignant of the enemies. See on chap. ii, 19. **The Jews think to rebel**—A wicked slander, but

thou mayest be their king, according to these words. **7** And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, *There is a king in Judah*: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together. **8** Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart. **9** For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. <sup>a</sup>Now therefore, *O God*, strengthen my hands. **10** Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Me-

hetabeel, who *was* shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee. **11** And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who *is there*, that, *being as I am*, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in. **12** And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he <sup>i</sup>pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. **13** Therefore *was* he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and *that* they might have *matter* for an evil report, that they might reproach

<sup>h</sup> Psa. 56. 3; 71. 1; Isa. 41. 10; Zech. 10. 12;

2 Cor. 12. 9; Eph. 3. 16.—<sup>i</sup> Ezek. 13. 22.

based ostensibly on the fact that they were fortifying their ancient capital. **Thou... their king**—It was probably hoped that this charge, made in an open letter so as to be known to all the Jews, would excite suspicions and hostility against Nehemiah. **According to these words**—This is the common formula for introducing a direct quotation, but as no such quotation is given, it is most natural to suppose, with Bertheau, that "these words," both here and in verse 7, refer to another similar accusation which Nehemiah did not think it necessary to transcribe.

### 7. Prophets to preach of thee—

Persons designated to proclaim his excellency and worth to the people, so as to gain him favour and prepare the way for his usurpation of royal authority and power. **A king in Judah**—That is, a descendant of David so noble and great that he ought to be made king of Judah. **Let us take counsel**—Whether these things are so, and what shall be done respecting these reports. Thus he hoped to frighten Nehemiah into a conference.

### 8. Thou feignest them... heart—

The governor no longer hesitates to charge his enemy with devising a wicked slander.

**9. Made us afraid**—Kept us in continual anxiety and alarm, and apprehensive of some hostile movement against us.

**10. Shemaiah**—This man seems to have been professedly a prophet of

God. Compare verse 12. **Who was shut up**—He feigned to be in fear of Sanballat and the other enemies, and seems to have imprisoned himself in his own house to show how much he was afraid. It afterward came out, however, that Tobiah and Sanballat had bribed him to do all this. Ver. 12. **Let us meet together in the house of God**—Let us at an appointed time enter and shut ourselves up in the temple. His object evidently was to frighten Nehemiah, and lead him into an act which would ruin his influence with the people. Such a flight into the temple would have laid him open to the charge of cowardice, and perhaps, also, of sacrilege, in rushing into the holy places of the house of God. See verse 13.

### 11. Should such a man as I flee

—I, who have nothing to be ashamed of, and am in the path of obedience and duty? Nehemiah had anxiety and alarm, (verse 9,) but no cowardice.

**12. God had not sent him**—Nehemiah soon perceived that Shemaiah was a false and lying prophet. **This prophecy**—Any utterance of a voice, counsel, or warning, given by a professed man of God, is in Old Testament usage a prophecy. **Had hired him**—This fact afterwards came to light, greatly to the honour of Nehemiah and to the shame of Shemaiah and those who bribed him. Here Sanballat was found doing the very thing which he had charged on Nehemiah. See verse 7.

me. **14** \* My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the 'prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear. **15** So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days. **16** And it came to pass, that <sup>when</sup> all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw

*these things*, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for "they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

**17** Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah<sup>a</sup> sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them. **18** For *there were* many in Judah sworn unto him, because he *was* the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken

k Chap. 12, 29.—l Ezek. 13, 17.—m Chap. 2, 10; 4, 1, 7; 6, 1.

n Psa. 126, 2.—3 Heb. *multiplied their letters passing to Tobiah.*

**14. My God**—Nehemiah's journal abounds with such pious ejaculations; they show his devotion to God and the truth. Comp. verse 9, chap. v, 19; xiii, 14, 22, 31. **The prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets**—Shemaiah was not the only tool that the enemies of the Jews found ready to do their will. Other prophets were bribed, and even a prophetess, whose name is immortalized in infamy by its association with these enemies of Israel. Nothing more is known of her.

**15. Elul**—The sixth month of the Jewish ecclesiastical year, corresponding nearly to our September. **Fifty and two days** back from the twenty-fifth of Elul would bring us to the third of the preceding month, Ab. The building of the wall was accordingly finished in the remarkably short time of less than two months. That this was possible, notwithstanding all the opposition of enemies, may be seen from the following considerations: "There is little doubt that several parts of the old wall were entire; in many places the foundations still remained; there were all the materials of the old wall still at hand; and though they had to clear off and carry away much rubbish, yet they do not appear to have had any stones to quarry. The work mentioned here was little when compared to what Cæsar did in Gaul and other places; and to what Titus did at Jerusalem, when he built a wall round that city of five thousand paces in three days, besides thirteen towers of ten stadia in circuit. And Quintus Curtius and Arrian inform us that Alexander the Great built the walls of Alexandria, which were nearly eight miles in compass, in the space

of between twenty and thirty days."—Clarke.

**16. They were much cast down**—Disappointed and chagrined to find that all their opposition had been futile. **Work was wrought of our God**—That is, it was evident to all—to enemies as well as Jews—that Divine providence had signally favoured the work of rebuilding Jerusalem.

**17. The nobles of Judah... letters unto Tobiah**—This secret correspondence between some of the nobles and Tobiah shows still more clearly the fearful embarrassments of Nehemiah. The enemy not only bribed some of the prophets, but also some of the nobles, to act the part of traitors. Verses 12, 14.

**18. Many in Judah sworn unto him**—Pledged for relationship's sake to advance Tobiah's interests. **He was the son in law of Shechaniah**—This was, perhaps, one of those cases of marriage with the heathen which it had been the last recorded work of Ezra to annul. Ezra x. A son of Elam who bore the name of Shechaniah (Ezra x, 2) had been the first to confess the people's great trespass, and to propose reform, but it is altogether probable that some of the more noble Jews on the one hand, and families like that of Tobiah among the heathen, refused to co-operate in Ezra's measures of reform. This would explain their treachery and hostility to Nehemiah and the mass of the Jews. **Arah**—Whose sons were among the first that came up from Babylon with Zerubbabel. Chap. vii, 10; Ezra ii, 5. **His son Johanan**—That is, Tobiah's son. **Meshullam**—Who was one of the builders on the wall. Chap. iii, 4.

the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah. **19** Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. *And* Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

### CHAPTER VII.

**N**OW it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had <sup>a</sup> set up the doors, and the porters and the singers and the Levites were appointed, **2** That

4 Or, *matters*.—*a* Chap. 6. 1.

The treachery among the nobles was owing altogether to these intermarriages. Tobiah (chap. xiii, 4) was also allied unto Eliashib the priest.

**19. They reported his good deeds before me**—Seeking to allay suspicions, and to show that Tobiah was not so bad a man as Nehemiah thought. They kept repeating his praises, and mentioning what they esteemed his noble deeds. But at the same time they **uttered**, or conveyed and reported, Nehemiah's **words to him**, and thus acted the despicable part of traitors. **Sent letters to put me in fear**—Just as Sanballat had done. Verse 5. But all their machinations came to naught, for the work was of God. Verse 16.

### CHAPTER VII.

THE GUARDING OF THE GATES, 1-3.

**1. Porters . . . singers . . . Levites were appointed**—To what specific service these persons *were appointed* is not said, but the context clearly indicates that it was to guard the doors and various quarters of the now enclosed and fortified Jerusalem. The appointed work of the *porters* formerly had been to guard the gates of the temple. They were reckoned by genealogies and separated into various divisions. See 1 Chron. ix, 17-27; xxvi, 1-12. **The singers** had charge of the service of song, (1 Chron. vi, 31,) and "their brethren **the Levites** were appointed unto all manner of service of the tabernacle of the house of God." 1 Chron. vi, 48. But amid the special dangers of the time Nehemiah may have seen fit to appoint them all to serve by turns in guarding the newly fortified city.

**2. My brother Hanani**—Who had

I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler <sup>b</sup> of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he *was* a faithful man, and <sup>c</sup> feared God above many.

**3** And I said unto them, let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot; and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar *them*: and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one *to be* over against his house.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 2. 8.—<sup>c</sup> Exod. 18. 21.

brought word to Nehemiah in Persia of the distressed state of Jerusalem. Chap. i, 2, 3. His faithful services and love for Judah and Jerusalem made him a proper man for the office now intrusted to him. **Ruler of the palace**—The chamberlain, or chief overseer of the fortress or *palace* connected with the temple, which is mentioned in chapter ii, 8, where see note. **Charge over Jerusalem**—Oversight of all parts of the city, but especially of the porters who guarded the gates.

**3. Until the sun be hot**—That is, until broad day. An earlier opening of the gates might expose the city to a sudden surprise. **While they stand by**—While the guard specially set apart to watch the gates still occupy their stations, that is, before they withdraw from their posts for the night. This special guard were to *stand by*, or take their positions, early in the morning, before the gates were opened, and there they kept watch all day, and were not allowed to withdraw till the doors were shut and barred for the night. **Appoint watches of the inhabitants**—That is, night watches. After the gates were closed and fastened it was still necessary to maintain a guard upon the walls. *The inhabitants of Jerusalem*, without reference to class or distinction, were required to do this. The great body of the people doubtless served, not all at once, but by some set arrangement by which each one took his turn, and served an appointed time. **Every one in his watch**—Every one had his well known watch-station. **Every one . . . his house**—The same arrangement also provided that every dwelling had a special guard.

**4** Now the city *was* <sup>5</sup>large and great: but the people *were* few therein, and the houses *were* not builded. **5** And my God put into mine heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be <sup>6</sup>reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein, **7** <sup>7</sup>These are the children of the province, that went up out of the captivity, of those that had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and came again to Jerusalem and to Judah, every one unto his city; **7** Who came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, <sup>8</sup>Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah. The number, *I say*, of the men of the people of Israel *was this*; **8** The children of Parosh, two thousand a hundred seventy and two. **9** The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two. **10** The children of Arah, six hundred fifty and two. **11** The children of Pahath-moab, of the children of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand and eight hundred and eighteen. **12** The children of Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. **13** The children of Zattu, eight hundred forty and five. **14** The children of Zaccai, seven hundred and threescore. **15** The children of <sup>15</sup>Binnui, six hundred forty and eight. **16** The children of Bebai, six hundred twenty and eight. **17** The children of Azgad, two thousand three hundred twenty and two. **18** The children of Adonikam, six hundred threescore and seven. **19** The children of Bigvai, two thousand threescore and seven. **20** The

children of Adin, six hundred fifty and five. **21** The children of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety and eight. **22** The children of Hashum, three hundred twenty and eight. **23** The children of Bezai, three hundred twenty and four. **24** The children of <sup>24</sup>Hariph, a hundred and twelve. **25** The children of <sup>25</sup>Gibeon, ninety and five. **26** The men of Beth-lehem and Netophah, a hundred fourscore and eight. **27** The men of Anathoth, a hundred twenty and eight. **28** The men of <sup>28</sup>Beth-azmaveth, forty and two. **29** The men of <sup>29</sup>Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred forty and three. **30** The men of Ramah and Gaba, six hundred twenty and one. **31** The men of Michmas, a hundred and twenty and two. **32** The men of Beth-el and Ai, a hundred twenty and three. **33** The men of the other Nebo, fifty and two. **34** The children of the other <sup>34</sup>Elam, a thousand two hundred fifty and four. **35** The children of Harin, three hundred and twenty. **36** The children of Jericho, three hundred forty and five. **37** The children of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred twenty and one. **38** The children of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty. **39** The priests: the children of <sup>39</sup>Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred seventy and three. **40** The children of <sup>40</sup>Immer, a thousand fifty and two. **41** The children of <sup>41</sup>Pashur, a thousand two hundred forty and seven. **42** The children of <sup>42</sup>Harim, a thousand and seventeen. **43** The Levites: the children of Jeshua, of Kadmiel, and of the children of <sup>43</sup>Hodevah, seventy and four. **44** The singers: the children of Asaph, a hun-

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *broad in spaces*.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Chron. 9. 1; Ezra 2. 62.—<sup>e</sup> Ezra 2. 1, etc.—<sup>6</sup> Or, *Serdiah*; see Ezra 2. 2.—<sup>7</sup> Or, *Bani*.—<sup>8</sup> Or, *Jora*.—<sup>9</sup> Or, *Gibbar*.—<sup>10</sup> Or, *Azmaveth*.

<sup>11</sup> Or, *Kirjath-arim*.—<sup>f</sup> See verse 12.—<sup>g</sup> 1 Chron. 24. 7.—<sup>h</sup> 1 Chron. 24. 14.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Chron. 9. 12; 24. 9.—<sup>k</sup> 1 Chron. 24. 8.—<sup>12</sup> Or, *Hodeviah*, Ezra 2. 40; or, *Judah*, Ezra 3. 9.

#### GENEALOGICAL REGISTRY OF THE PEOPLE, 4-73.

**4. The city was large**—Broad-  
minded, extensive; so that it required  
many watchers to keep guard on every  
side. **The people were few therein**  
—That is, comparatively few, and far  
from sufficient to occupy the great  
space enclosed by the walls. **And  
the houses...not builded**—That is,  
the majority of the houses of the  
ancient city were fallen in ruins, and  
comparatively few had been fitted up  
for the present use of the returned  
exiles.

**5. God put into mine heart**—In-  
spired me with the thought and pur-  
pose about to be told. **To gather to-  
gether the nobles...rulers...peo-  
ple**—The object of this gathering was  
to ascertain the number of the people,  
and see how many or what proportion  
of them might be brought to dwell in  
Jerusalem, and thus increase the popu-  
lation of the city. The result of this  
plan is told in chap. xi, 1, 2. **I found  
a register**—Which is presented in the  
sequel of this chapter, and is substan-  
tially identical with that of Ezra ii,  
where see notes.

dred forty and eight. **45** The porters: the children of Shallum, the children of Ater, the children of Talmon, the children of Akkub, the children of Hatita, the children of Shobai, a hundred thirty and eight. **46** The Nethinim: the children of Ziha, the children of Hashupha, the children of Tabbaoth, **47** The children of Keros, the children of <sup>13</sup> Sia, the children of Padon, **48** The children of Lebana, the children of Hagaba, the children of <sup>14</sup> Shalmi, **49** The children of Hanan, the children of Giddel, the children of Gahar, **50** The children of Reaiah, the children of Rezin, the children of Nekoda, **51** The children of Gazzam, the children of Uzza, the children of Paseah, **52** The children of Besai, the children of Meunim, the children of <sup>15</sup> Nephishesim, **53** The children of Bakbuk, the children of Hakupha, the children of Harhur, **54** The children of <sup>16</sup> Bazlith, the children of Mehida, the children of Harsha, **55** The children of Barkos, the children of Sisera, the children of Tamah, **56** The children of Neziah, the children of Hatipha. **57** The children of Solomon's servants: the children of Sotai, the children of Sophereth, the children of <sup>17</sup> Perida, **58** The children of Jaala, the children of Darkon, the children of Giddel, **59** The children of Shephatiah, the children of Hattil, the children of Pochereth of Zebaim, the children of <sup>18</sup> Amon. **60** All the Nethinim, and the children of Solomon's servants, were three hundred ninety and two. **61** <sup>1</sup> And these were they which went up also from Tel-melah, Tel-haresha, Cherub, <sup>19</sup> Addon, and Immer: but they could not show their father's house, nor their <sup>20</sup> seed, whether they were of Israel. **62** The children of Delaiah, the children of Tobiah, the children of Nekoda, six hundred forty and two. **63** And of the priests: the children of Habaiah, the children of Koz, the children of Barzillai, which took one

<sup>13</sup> Or, *Siaha*.—<sup>14</sup> Or, *Shalmi*.—<sup>15</sup> Or, *Nephusim*.—<sup>16</sup> Or, *Bazluth*.—<sup>17</sup> Or, *Perida*.—<sup>18</sup> Or, *Ami*.—<sup>19</sup> Or, *Addan*.—<sup>20</sup> Or, *pedigree*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE READING AND EXPOUNDING OF THE LAW, 1-8.

**1. The people gathered**—By command of the governor. **The street...** before the water gate—The broad open place in front of one of the gates of one of the inner walls of the city.

of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite to wife, and was called after their name. **64** These sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found: therefore were they, <sup>m</sup> as polluted, put from the priesthood. **65** And <sup>21</sup> the Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim. **66** The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore. **67** Besides their manservants and their maidservants, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred thirty and seven: and they had two hundred forty and five singing men and singing women. **68** Their horses, seven hundred thirty and six: their mules, two hundred forty and five: **69** Their camels, four hundred thirty and five: six thousand seven hundred and twenty asses. **70** And <sup>22</sup> some of the chief of the fathers gave unto the work. <sup>n</sup> The Tirshatha gave to the treasure a thousand drams of gold, fifty basins, five hundred and thirty priests' garments. **71** And some of the chief of the fathers gave to the treasure of the work <sup>o</sup> twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand and two hundred pounds of silver. **72** And that which the rest of the people gave was twenty thousand drams of gold, and two thousand pounds of silver, and threescore and seven priests' garments. **73** So the priests, and the Levites, and the porters, and the singers, and some of the people, and the Nethinim, and all Israel, dwelt in their cities; <sup>p</sup> and when the seventh month came, the children of Israel were in their cities.

## CHAPTER VIII.

**A**ND all <sup>a</sup> the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was <sup>b</sup> before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the <sup>c</sup> scribe to bring the book of the law of

<sup>m</sup> Chap. 13. 29; Lev. 4. 3.—<sup>21</sup> Or, *the governor*, chap. 8. 9.—<sup>22</sup> Heb. *part*.—<sup>n</sup> Chap. 8. 9.—<sup>o</sup> So Ezra 2. 69.—<sup>p</sup> Ezra 3. 1.—<sup>c</sup> Ezra 3. 1.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 3. 26.—<sup>c</sup> Ezra 7. 6.

The exact locality of the water gate is unknown, but it seems to have been somewhere near the bridge across the Tyropæon at the western wall of the temple area. See note on chap. iii. 26. **They spake unto Ezra**—That is, the assembled people spake by their rulers or representatives. They knew for what purpose they had been assem-

Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. **2** And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all <sup>1</sup> that could hear with understanding, <sup>c</sup> upon the first day of the seventh month. **3** And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate <sup>2</sup> from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. **4** And Ezra the scribe stood upon a <sup>3</sup> pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattathiah, and Shema, and Ananiah, and Urijah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah,

<sup>d</sup> Deut. 31. 11, 12. — <sup>1</sup> Heb. *that understood in hearing.* — <sup>e</sup> Lev. 23. 24. — <sup>2</sup> Heb. *from the light.* — <sup>3</sup> Heb. *tower of wood.* — <sup>4</sup> Heb. *eyes.* — <sup>f</sup> Judges 3. 20.

bled, and were all anxious to become acquainted with the law. **Ezra the scribe**—Here again, after an absence of twelve years, this distinguished scribe appears among the Jews at Jerusalem. He had probably spent the intervening time at Babylon. See remarks at the end of the Book of Ezra.

**2. Ezra the priest**—He was descended from Aaron, and was therefore a *priest*, as well as a most distinguished scribe. See note on Ezra vii, 1. **All that could hear with understanding**—More literally, *all having understanding to hear*; that is, all children and young persons old enough to listen intelligently to the reading and exposition of the law. **The first day of the seventh month**—The day for the feast of trumpets. Lev. xxiii, 24. This month bore the names Ethanim and Tisri, and corresponded nearly with our October. It was also the first month of the civil year, so that its first was new year's day. The tenth of this month was the day of atonement, and on the fifteenth began the feast of tabernacles. Lev. xxiii, 27, 34.

**3. He read . . . from the morning until midday**—Relieved and assisted at times by the priests and Levites beside him.

**4. A pulpit of wood**—Septuagint, *a wooden platform*. Some elevated stage or platform, from which a speaker could easily be seen and heard by the

on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishaël, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. **5** And Ezra opened the book in the <sup>4</sup> sight of all the people; for he was above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people <sup>5</sup> stood up: **6** And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people <sup>6</sup> answered, Amen, Amen, with <sup>6</sup> lifting up their hands: and they <sup>7</sup> bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with *their faces to the ground*. **7** Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherobiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, <sup>8</sup> caused the

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. 14. 16. — <sup>h</sup> Lam. 3. 41; 1 Tim. 2. 8. — <sup>i</sup> Exod. 4. 31; 12. 27; 2 Chron. 20. 18. — <sup>k</sup> Lev. 10. 11; Deut. 33. 10; 2 Chron. 17. 7-9; Mal. 2. 7.

people. **Mattathiah . . . Shema . . . Ananiah**—The persons named in this verse, who stood beside Ezra and assisted him, were priests; those named in verse 7 were Levites.

**5. Opened the book**—That is, unrolled it, as a scroll. **He was above all the people**—Because he occupied the elevated pulpit or platform mentioned in the previous verse. **The people stood up**—Out of respect for the sacred book and the solemn service about to commence.

**6. Ezra blessed the Lord**—After the manner of David in 1 Chron. xxix, 10-20. **People answered, Amen**—Such responses characterized the ancient worship, and ought ever to be retained. They show that not one but all are interested. **Lifting up their hands**—An ancient custom in worship, (compare Psa. xxvii, 2; lxiii, 4; Lam. iii, 41; 1 Tim. ii, 8,) as was also the bowing of the head. Comp. marginal references. This latter sign of reverence and respect is the least that can be expected of any attendant upon Divine worship. An irreverent looking around over an assembly engaged in prayer is a mark of ill-breeding, to say nothing of the respectful reverence which all true worship demands.

**7. And the Levites**—Or, *even the Levites*. We understand that the persons named in this verse were all Levites, in distinction from the priests

people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place. 8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

*l* Ezra 2. 63; chap. 7. 65; 10. 1.—*5* Or, *the governor*.—*m* 2 Chron. 35. 3; verse 8.

named in verse 4. **Caused the people to understand the law**—This was a part of the regular work of the priests and Levites. See marginal references. On this occasion it was probably necessary for them to translate and explain the law in the vulgar tongue for the benefit of a large part of the people. See note on next verse. **The people... in their place**—That is, around the platform, and in sight and hearing of the priests and Levites.

8. **In the book in the law**—An emphatic intimation that *the book* from which *they read* was no other than *the law of God*. From the form of words here used we may infer that there were then extant other sacred books besides the book of the

law. **Distinctly**—מְפָרֵשׁ, the word thus rendered is the Pual participle of פָּרַשׁ, *to spread out*, and by most interpreters is understood to designate the clear and distinct manner—the audible voice—in which the law was read. Bertheau explains it as a distinct recitation which followed certain appointed rules, and accordingly required very special discipline. This thought may be partly involved, since to read intelligibly before so large and uncultivated an audience would require peculiar care and tact; but the reference is rather to the open, easily-apprehended style of the reading, “opposite (says Fürst) to quick, hasty, indistinct, unintelligible.” Others (Pfeiffer, Keil) understand a running exposition or paraphrase of the reading, made by the readers themselves in the Hebrew language. But this would make what immediately follows superfluous and tautological. The Rabbins and some others understand a translation of the law into Aramæan, or the vulgar tongue. But the word פָּרַשׁ seems not to be used in Hebrew in this sense, and were this the meaning

9 <sup>1</sup>And Nehemiah, which *is* <sup>2</sup>the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, <sup>3</sup>and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, <sup>4</sup>This day *is* holy unto the Lord your God; <sup>5</sup>mourn

*n* Leviticus 23. 24; Numbers 29. 1.—*o* Deuteronomy 16. 14, 15; Ecclesiastes 3. 4.

we should certainly have had the thought more clearly and fully expressed. Comp. Ezra iv, 7. It is very probable that some of the auditors needed the law translated for them in order to comprehend its import, and this is implied in the next words, **and gave the sense**, which words would, as urged against the preceding exposition of Pfeiffer and Keil, be superfluous, if מְפָרֵשׁ here meant to translate or interpret. We accordingly adopt the rendering of the English version, which follows the Vulgate and Syriac. **Gave the sense**—Set forth the meaning; made it intelligible to all the people. To do this it might often have been necessary to explain the Hebrew Scriptures in the Chaldee language, which had so far come into use among the Jews at Babylon as to make it difficult for many of the people to understand the Hebrew. **Caused them to understand the reading**—This is but another way of expressing again what has been said in the previous sentence, and it is, therefore, better, with the Vulgate, Septuagint, Bertheau, Keil, and others, to render, *and they* (the people, the hearers) *gave heed to the reading*. They paid careful and reverent attention and understood the reading.

THE FEAST OF THE NEW MOON, 9–12.

The reading of the law made a profound impression on the minds of the people, and they were moved to weeping. It brought also to their attention the duty of observing the feasts of the seventh month, and having spent the first half of the day in hearing the law. (verse 3,) they were dismissed with words of comfort to observe the feast of the new moon, the feast of trumpets.

9. **The Tirshatha**—See on Ezra ii, 63. We note that Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites, **said unto all the people** the words that follow. The direction to observe the feast proba-

not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. **10** Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, <sup>p</sup> and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this day is holy* unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength. **11** So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day *is*

<sup>p</sup> Esther 9. 19, 22; Rev. 11. 10.

bly originated with Ezra, and was then proclaimed by the Tirshatha, and communicated to all the people by the Levites. **This day is holy**—According to the law the first day of the seventh month was to be observed as “a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation,” during which no servile work should be done. Lev. xxiii, 24; Num. xxix, 1. It was a day of gladness and festivity, and the people were exhorted to comfort themselves by appropriately observing it.

**10. He said**—That is, Nehemiah, the governor. He issued the order, being the public executive. **Eat the fat**—Literally, *fatnesses*; that is, the fat pieces of flesh; the fat things. **Drink the sweet**—Hebrew, *sweetnesses*; the sweet drinks, especially the new wine of that season. **Send portions**—That the poor and destitute, for whom nothing is prepared, but what is freely given by those who have abundance, may rejoice and feast with the rest of the people. Comp. Esther ix, 19, 22; Deut. xvi, 14. **The joy of the Lord is your strength**—The *joy of Jehovah* is the delight and comfort which Jehovah imparts to his faithful servants; a consciousness of God's favour, mercy, and long-suffering. The word rendered *strength* commonly means a *fortress*, a fortified citadel, or stronghold. They surely should not be sorry who abide in the joy of Jehovah as in a strong fortress.

**11. Stilled all the people**—Hushed their loud lamentation. The call to observe the feast of trumpets, and the comforting words that accompanied it, cheered and strengthened the hearts of the people, and they went forth to enjoy the rest of the day with becoming festivity.

VOL. IV.—30

holy; neither be ye grieved. **12** And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to <sup>q</sup> send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

**13** And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even

<sup>q</sup> Verse 10.—<sup>r</sup> Verses 7, 8.

THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES, 13-18.

**13. The second day**—The second day of the month, the next day after the feast of the new moon. So interested had the people become in the reading of the law, that on the very next day after the feast **the chief of the fathers**, the principal elders and representatives of the nation, met again to continue the study of the law. There were manifest inconveniences in assembling the entire population, men, women, and children, as on the previous day, (verse 2,) and so only the chief representatives came together on the second day. Along with the principal fathers came also **the priests and the Levites**, for it was important that all of these should know the law. Bertheau and Keil construe the words *the priests and the Levites* with **all the people**, as genitive, (with <sup>h</sup>,) after *chief of the fathers*; that is, *chief fathers of the priests and of the Levites*, as well as *of all the people*. According to this construction, not all the priests and Levites came, but only their chief elders or representatives. We prefer, however, to construe the words *priests and Levites* as subjects to the verb *were gathered*, and to understand that the priests and Levites assembled with the rest, not merely by their principal leaders, but in a body. It need not follow that *all* the priests and Levites were present, but rather the principal part of them. **Unto Ezra the scribe**—Who was profoundly versed in the law, and so capable of instructing all classes of the people. **Even to understand**—This states the purpose for which they came to Ezra. The *vav*, (<sup>h</sup>), translated *even*, denotes that what follows is an additional and explanatory clause. Its force may be given

Q. T

\*to understand the words of the law. **14** And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded <sup>7</sup>by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in \*booths in the feast of the seventh month: **15** And <sup>1</sup>that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and <sup>2</sup>in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and <sup>3</sup>fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and

<sup>6</sup>Or, *that they might instruct in the words of the law.*—<sup>7</sup>Heb. *by the hand of.*—<sup>8</sup>Lev. 23. 34, 42; Deut. 16. 13.

thus: and (their coming to Ezra was) for the purpose of giving thoughtful attention (השכיל) to the words of the law.

**14. They found written**—That is, in the course of their reading and study they came to the passage treating of the feast of tabernacles. The passage was not found as a new discovery—a law and custom of whose existence they were not aware—for the feast had been celebrated in the time of Zerubbabel, (Ezra iii, 4,) and, doubtless, often afterwards. The law on the feast of tabernacles is found at Lev. xxiii, 34–43, and Deut. xvi, 13–15.

**15. Unto the mount**—Where the branches of trees would be naturally sought. **Olive...pine...myrtle...**



MYRTLE BRANCH.

myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as *it is* written. **16** So the people went forth, and brought *them*, and made themselves booths, every one upon the <sup>2</sup>roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the <sup>3</sup>water gate, <sup>4</sup>and in the street of the gate of Ephraim. **17** And all the con-

<sup>t</sup> Lev. 23. 4.—<sup>u</sup> Deut. 16. 16.—<sup>s</sup> Lev. 23. 40.—<sup>v</sup> Deut. 22. 8.—<sup>x</sup> Chap. 12. 37.—<sup>y</sup> 2 Kings 14. 13; chap. 12. 39.

**palm...thick trees**—Lev. xxiii, 40, mentions only *palms*, *thick trees*, and *willows*. No special stress seems to have been laid on the kind of trees, but any and all kinds of trees, whose boughs would serve for making booths, might be sought. The word for *pine* is literally *tree of fatness*, and is usually understood of the wild olive, or oleaster, but this is far from certain. The Hebrew word occurs but twice elsewhere; in 1 Kings vi, 23, where it is rendered *olive tree*, and in Isa. xli, 19, where it is rendered *oil tree*. The *myrtle* is here first mentioned in the Bible. Royle (in Kitto's Cyclopædia) speaks of its ancient and modern celebrity as “justly due to the rich colouring of its dark green and shining leaves, contrasted with the white starlike clusters of its flowers, affording in hot countries a pleasant shade under its branches, and diffusing an agreeable odour from its flowers or bruised leaves.” *Thick trees* denote any trees of thick foliage.

**16. Upon the roof of his house**—Nearly every available place would be used, and those who occupied houses in Jerusalem would find it most convenient to build their booths either on the flat roofs of their houses, or **in their courts**, the inclosed yards in the rear of their houses. **The courts of the house of God**—Here the priests and Levites would naturally build their booths, while those persons who were not residents of Jerusalem would make theirs **in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim**. The open space before the water gate was where all the people assembled to hear the public reading of the law. See on

gregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very <sup>2</sup>great gladness. **18** Also <sup>a</sup>day by day, from the first lay unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept <sup>b</sup>he feast seven days; and on the eighth

<sup>a</sup> 2 Chron. 30. 21.—<sup>a</sup> Deut. 31. 10, &c.—<sup>b</sup> Hebrew, *a restraint*.—<sup>b</sup> Lev. 23. 36; Num. 29. 35.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 8. 2.

verse 1 and chap. iii, 26. The gate of Ephraim was doubtless in the northern wall, opening towards the territory of Ephraim. See on 2 Kings xiv, 13.

**17. Since the days of Joshua... had not the children of Israel done so**—The emphasis is on *so*. The feast of tabernacles had often been observed since the time of Joshua, but not in *such a way* as on this occasion, when **all the congregation... made booths, and sat under the booths**. "The words do not imply," says Keil, "that since the days of Joshua to that time no booths at all had been made at the celebration of the feast of tabernacles, but only that this had not been done by the whole congregation. On former occasions, those who came up to Jerusalem may have regarded this precept as non-essential, and contented themselves by keeping the feast with solemn assemblies, sacrifices, and sacrificial feasts, without making booths and dwelling in them for seven days."

**18. Day by day... he read**—The people needed instruction, and the feast of tabernacles afforded a most suitable occasion for the public reading of the law. The law also enjoined such a public reading once in seven years at the feast of tabernacles. Deut. xxxi, 10, 11. **He read**—That is, Ezra read, or caused to be read. He was, doubtless, assisted during the seven days by the priests and the Levites, as he had been on the first day of the month. Verses 1-8. **A solemn assembly**—The same as the *holy convocation* mentioned in Leviticus xxiii, 36. **According unto the manner**—Or, *according to custom*. Aside from the extensive reading of the law and the whole community dwelling in booths,

day was <sup>a</sup>a solemn assembly, <sup>b</sup>according unto the manner.

## CHAPTER IX.

**N**OW in the twenty and fourth day of <sup>a</sup>this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, and with sackcloth, <sup>b</sup>and earth upon them. **2** And <sup>c</sup>the seed of Israel separated themselves from all <sup>d</sup>strangers, and

<sup>b</sup> Josh. 7. 6; 1 Sam. 4. 12; 2 Sam. 1. 2; Job 2. 12.—<sup>c</sup> Ezra 10. 11; chap. 13. 3, 30.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Heb. *strange children*.

which specially distinguished this particular feast, the other observances followed general usage.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE DAY OF PENITENCE AND PRAYER, 1-37.

**1. The twenty and fourth day**—Two days after the close of the feast of tabernacles. **With fasting**—Or, *in fasting*; in this way they observed the day. After the seven days' feast came one day's fast. They had left off weeping to observe the joyful feasts, (chap. viii, 9,) now they return again to sorrow. **With sackcloth**—Black garments made usually of goats' hair, (Rev. vi, 12,) and used as a penitential garb by mourners when in great distress. **Earth... them**—Another sign of bitter humiliation and grief. Comp. Josh. vii, 5; 1 Sam. iv, 12; 2 Sam. i, 2; Job ii, 12. In the history of Israel each period, however short, of prosperity and joy seems to have had its dark background of adversity and sadness.

**2. Seed of Israel**—The pure descendants of Israel, as distinguished from the offspring of unlawful mixed marriages. **Separated themselves from all strangers**—Renounced all fellowship with the heathen, and dissolved all their marriages with strange women. Marriages of this character had been one of the great sins of the people which Ezra had corrected some time before, (Ezra ix and x,) but even up to this time they were not all pure, and at a still later day Nehemiah had to contend again with the same evil. Chap. xiii, 23-30. **Stood and confessed**—As is more fully shown in the penitential prayer that follows after verse 5.

stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. **3** And they stood up in their place, and <sup>d</sup>read in the book of the law of the Lord their God *one fourth part of the day*; and *another fourth part* they confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God. **4** Then stood up upon the <sup>e</sup>stairs, of the Levites, Jeshua, and Bani, Kadmiel, Sheb-aniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani, and cried with a loud voice unto the Lord their God. **5** Then the Levites, Jeshua, and Kadmiel, Bani,

<sup>d</sup> Chap. 8. 7, 8. — <sup>e</sup> 2 Or, scaffold. — <sup>e</sup> 1 Chron. 29. 13. — <sup>f</sup> 2 Kings 19. 15, 19; Psa. 86. 10; Isa. 87. 16, 20.

**3. Read in...the law**—In the same manner, probably, as on the first day of the month. Chap. viii, 1–8. **One fourth part of the day**—About three hours, reckoning from the twelve hours of the labourer's day. The first part of the day was devoted to the reading of the law; the second part to confession of sins and worship.

**4. Stairs**—Margin, *scaffold*. Probably the same platform, or “pulpit of wood,” used for the same purpose on the first day of the month. Chapter viii, 4. **The Levites**—By comparing the names in this verse with those in verse 5, we find the name **Bani** twice in this verse and once in the next. The names **Bunni** and **Chenani** of this verse are not found in verse 5, and **Hashabniah**, **Hodijah**, and **Pethahiah**, do not appear in verse 4. Keil attributes these differences to a clerical error, but this is unnecessary. Some of the Levites who called upon the people to stand up and worship may not have been different from those who **cried with a loud voice unto the Lord their God**. We suppose that a large part of the worship of the latter half of the day was liturgical and antiphonal, and the penitential prayer that follows was probably prepared for the occasion, and recited by the Levites and the people alternately. Some parts may have been antiphonally recited by Levites alone, one party responding to the other. Other parts may have been recited by the people in response to the priests and Levites.

The psalm that follows is a most im-

Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Sheb-aniah, and Pethahiah, said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God for ever, and ever: and blessed be <sup>g</sup>thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise. **6** *Thou, even thou, art Lord alone*; <sup>h</sup>thou hast made heaven, <sup>i</sup>the heaven of heavens, with <sup>j</sup>all their host, the earth, and all <sup>k</sup>things that are therein, the seas, and all that <sup>l</sup>is therein, and thou <sup>m</sup>preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee. **7** Thou art the Lord the God,

<sup>g</sup> Gen. 1. 1; Exod. 20. 11; Rev. 14. 7. — <sup>h</sup> Deut. 10. 14; 1 Kings 8. 27. — <sup>i</sup> Gen. 2. 1. — <sup>j</sup> Psa. 36. 6.

pressive and admirable specimen of penitential prayer. With it should be compared the ninth chapter of Daniel and Psalm cvi. It recounts and bewails the numerous sins of Israel which brought upon them the righteous judgments of God. The Septuagint represents it as the prayer of Ezra, and introduces verse 6 with the words, *and Ezra said*, and Bertheau adopts this reading as the probable original Hebrew text. It is very probable that the prayer was composed by Ezra for this occasion, and it might have been uttered by him, or any other individual, in the name and behalf of the whole nation; but the call for the people to “stand up and bless Jehovah,” and the general form and phraseology of the prayer, place it among the liturgical psalms of the Old Testament, and show it specially suitable to be used by the whole congregation.

**5. Stand up**—The Levites thus call upon the congregation to join in offering the prayer, and probably the people, rising, responded, **and blessed be thy glorious name**, etc. And thus they continued, reciting and responding, through all this confession prepared for them by Ezra. **For ever and ever**—Hebrew, *from everlasting to everlasting*. Always and unceasingly is Jehovah to be praised. **Exalted above all blessing**—All worship and praise must fail fully to recognise and appreciate the worth and power of that GLORIOUS NAME.

**6. All their host**—The glorious host of stars. Compare Genesis ii, 1. **Host of heaven worshippeth thee**

who didst choose <sup>1</sup> Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of <sup>m</sup> Abraham; **8** And foundest his heart <sup>a</sup> faithful before thee, and madest a <sup>c</sup> covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Jebusites, and the Girgashites, to give *it, I say*, to his seed, and <sup>p</sup> hast performed thy words; for thou *art* righteous: **9** <sup>a</sup> And didst see the affliction of our fathers in Egypt, and <sup>h</sup> heardest their cry by the Red Sea; **10** And <sup>s</sup> showedst signs and wonders upon Pharaoh, and on all his servants, and on all the people of his land: for thou knewest that they <sup>t</sup> dealt proudly against them. So didst thou <sup>g</sup> get thee a name, as *it is* this day. **11** <sup>v</sup> And thou didst divide the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their persecutors thou threwest into the deeps, <sup>w</sup> as a stone into the mighty waters. **12** Moreover thou <sup>x</sup> leddest them in the day by a cloudy pillar; and in the night by a pillar of fire, to give them light in the way wherein they should go. **13** <sup>v</sup> Thou camest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them <sup>r</sup> right judgments, and <sup>t</sup> true laws, good statutes and commandments: **14** And madest known unto them thy <sup>h</sup> holy sabbath, and commandedst them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses

<sup>l</sup> Gen. 11. 31; 12. 1.—<sup>m</sup> Gen. 17. 5.—<sup>n</sup> Gen. 15. 6.—<sup>o</sup> Gen. 12. 7; 15. 18; 17. 7, 8.—<sup>p</sup> Josh. 23. 14.—<sup>q</sup> Exod. 2. 25; 3. 7.—<sup>r</sup> Exod. 14. 10.—<sup>s</sup> Exodus, chapters 7-10, 12, & 14.—<sup>t</sup> Exod. 18. 11.—<sup>u</sup> Exod. 9. 16; Isa. 63. 12, 14; Jer. 32. 20; Dan. 9. 15.—<sup>v</sup> Exod. 14. 21, 22, 27, 28; Psa. 78. 13.—<sup>w</sup> Exod. 15. 5, 10.—<sup>x</sup> Exod. 13. 21.—<sup>y</sup> Exod. 19. 20; 20. 1.—<sup>z</sup> Psa. 19. 8, 9; Rom. 7. 12.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *law of truth*.—<sup>a</sup> Gen. 2. 3; Exod. 20. 8, 11.—<sup>b</sup> Exod. 16. 14, 15; John 6. 31.—<sup>c</sup> Exod. 17. 6; Num. 20. 9, &c.

—Here the host of angels are intended. Compare Psa. ciii, 21; cxlviii, 2.

**7. Abram... Abraham**—See Gen. xvii, 5. For the various historical allusions throughout the chapter, see the marginal references.

**10. Get thee a name**—A wondrous fame for Almighty power over false gods. Jehovah made for himself such a name by the miracles which he wrought for Israel. **As it is this day**—Jehovah's fame had not departed, for in Nehemiah's time the miracles of the Exodus were still remembered and extolled.

thy servant: **15** And <sup>b</sup> gavest them bread from heaven for their hunger, and <sup>c</sup> broughtest forth water for them out of the rock for their thirst, and promisedst them that they should <sup>d</sup> go in to possess the land <sup>e</sup> which thou hadst sworn to give them. **16** <sup>e</sup> But they and our fathers dealt proudly, and <sup>f</sup> hardened their necks, and hearkened not to thy commandments, **17** And refused to obey, <sup>g</sup> neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed <sup>h</sup> a captain to return to their bondage: but thou *art* <sup>a</sup> a God ready to pardon, <sup>i</sup> gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not. **18** Yea, <sup>k</sup> when they had made them a molten calf, and said, This *is* thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great provocations; **19** Yet thou in thy <sup>l</sup> manifold mercies forsookest them not in the wilderness: the <sup>m</sup> pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to show them light, and the way wherein they should go. **20** Thou gavest also thy <sup>n</sup> good Spirit to instruct them, and witheldest not thy <sup>o</sup> manna from their mouth, and gavest them <sup>p</sup> water for their thirst. **21** Yea, <sup>q</sup> forty years didst thou sustain them in the wilderness, *so that* they lacked nothing; their <sup>r</sup> clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not. **22** Moreover

<sup>d</sup> Deut. 1. 8.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *which thou hadst lifted up thine hand to give them*, Num. 14. 30.—<sup>e</sup> Verse 29; Psa. 106. 6.—<sup>f</sup> Deut. 31. 27; 2 Kings 17. 14; 2 Chron. 30. 8; Jer. 19. 15.—<sup>g</sup> Psa. 78. 11, 42, 43.—<sup>h</sup> Num. 14. 4.—<sup>5</sup> Heb. *a God of pardons*.—<sup>i</sup> Exod. 34. 6; Num. 14. 18; Psa. 86. 5, 15; Joel 2. 13.—<sup>k</sup> Exod. 32. 4.—<sup>l</sup> Verse 27; Psa. 106. 45.—<sup>m</sup> Num. 13. 21, 22; Num. 14. 14; 1 Cor. 10. 1.—<sup>n</sup> Num. 11. 17; Isa. 63. 11.—<sup>o</sup> Exod. 16. 15; Josh. 5. 12.—<sup>p</sup> Exod. 17. 6.—<sup>q</sup> Deut. 2. 7.—<sup>r</sup> Deut. 8. 4; 29. 5.

**15. Thou hadst sworn**—Literally, as the margin, *which thou didst lift up thy hand to give them*. Allusion to the custom or ceremony of solemnly raising the hand in taking an oath.

**16. They and our fathers**—This should be rendered, *and they, even our fathers*.

**17. Appointed a captain**—According to Num. xiv, 4 the Israelites only proposed among themselves to appoint a captain, but it is quite probable that they also carried **their rebellion** so far as actually to nominate a new leader.

thou gavest them kingdoms and nations, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of <sup>a</sup>Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan. **23** <sup>a</sup>Their children also multipliedst thou as the stars of heaven, and broughtest them into the land, concerning which thou hadst promised to their fathers, that they should go in to possess *it*. **24** So <sup>a</sup>the children went in and possessed the land, and <sup>a</sup>thou subduedst before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and gavest them into their hands, with their kings, and the people of the land, that they might do with them <sup>a</sup>as they would. **25** And they took strong cities, and a <sup>a</sup>fat land, and possessed <sup>a</sup>houses full of all goods, <sup>a</sup>wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and <sup>a</sup>fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and <sup>a</sup>became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great <sup>a</sup>goodness. **26** Nevertheless they <sup>a</sup>were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and <sup>b</sup>cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy <sup>c</sup>prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations. **27** <sup>a</sup>Therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them: and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou <sup>a</sup>heardest *them* from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies <sup>a</sup>thou gavest them saviours, who

saved them out of the hand of their enemies. **28** But after they had rest, <sup>a</sup>they did evil again before thee: therefore leftest thou them in the hand of their enemies, so that they had the dominion over them: yet when they returned, and cried unto thee, thou heardest *them* from heaven; and <sup>a</sup>many times didst thou deliver them according to thy mercies; **29** And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they <sup>a</sup>dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, <sup>a</sup>which if a man do, he shall live in them; and <sup>a</sup>withdrew the shoulder, and hardened their neck, and would not hear. **30** Yet many years didst thou <sup>a</sup>forbear them, and testifiedst <sup>a</sup>against them by thy Spirit <sup>a</sup>in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: <sup>a</sup>therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands. **31** Nevertheless for thy great mercies' sake <sup>a</sup>thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for thou art <sup>a</sup>a gracious and merciful God. **32** Now therefore, our God, the great, the <sup>a</sup>mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the <sup>a</sup>trouble seem little before thee, <sup>a</sup>that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, <sup>a</sup>since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. **33** Howbeit <sup>a</sup>thou art just

<sup>a</sup> Num. 21. 21, &c.—<sup>b</sup> Gen. 22. 17.—<sup>c</sup> Josh. 1. 2, &c.—<sup>d</sup> Psa. 44. 2, 3.—<sup>e</sup> Heb. *according to their will*.—<sup>f</sup> Verse 35; Num. 13. 27; Deut. 8. 7, 8; Ezek. 20. 6.—<sup>g</sup> Deut. 6. 11.—<sup>h</sup> Or, *cisterns*.—<sup>i</sup> Heb. *tree of food*.—<sup>j</sup> Deut. 32. 15.—<sup>k</sup> Hosea 3. 5.—<sup>l</sup> Judges 2. 11, 12; Ezek. 20. 21.—<sup>m</sup> 1 Kings 14. 9; Psa. 50. 17.—<sup>n</sup> 1 Kings 18. 4; 19. 10; 2 Chron. 24. 20, 21; Matt. 23. 37; Acts 7. 52.—<sup>o</sup> Judges 2. 14; 3. 8, &c.; Psa. 106. 41, 42.—<sup>p</sup> Psa. 106. 44.—<sup>q</sup> Judges 2. 18; 3. 9.—<sup>r</sup> Heb. *they returned to do evil*.

<sup>g</sup> So Judges 3. 11, 12, 30; 4. 1; 5. 31; 6. 1.—<sup>h</sup> Psa. 106. 43.—<sup>i</sup> Ver. 16.—<sup>j</sup> Lev. 18. 5; Ezek. 20. 11; Rom. 10. 5; Gal. 3. 12.—<sup>k</sup> Heb. *they gave a withdrawing shoulder*, Zech. 7. 11.—<sup>l</sup> 2 Kings 17. 13; 2 Chron. 36. 15; Jer. 7. 25; 25. 4.—<sup>m</sup> 2 Heb. *in the hand of thy prophets*.—<sup>n</sup> Acts 7. 51; 1 Pet. 1. 11; 2 Pet. 1. 21.—<sup>o</sup> Isa. 5. 5; 42. 24.—<sup>p</sup> Jer. 4. 27; 5. 10, 18.—<sup>q</sup> Verse 17.—<sup>r</sup> Exod. 34. 6, 7; chap. 1. 5.—<sup>s</sup> Heb. *weariness*.—<sup>t</sup> 14 Heb. *that hath found us*.—<sup>u</sup> 2 Kings 17. 3.—<sup>v</sup> Psa. 119. 137; Dan. 9. 14.

**22. Thou gavest them kingdoms and nations**—Namely, the kingdoms and peoples of the land of Canaan. **Divide them into corners**—Or, *divide them according to borders*. That is, thou didst divide those kingdoms (their territory) according to definite boundary lines. The conquered land was distributed among the Israelites according to their tribes, as is recorded in the Book of Joshua. So Bertheau and Keil explain; but others, as Gesenius, refer the suffix to the Israelites, thus: *thou didst distribute them (the Israelites) into various quarters*.

**29. Withdrew the shoulder**—Like the refractory ox or the "backsliding heifer" (Hos. iv, 16) that rebels against the yoke. Compare Zech. vii, 11.

**30. Forbear them**—Margin, *protract over them*. An elliptical expression for prolonging one's mercy or kindness. Compare the fuller form in Psa. xxxvi, 10; cix, 12; Jer. xxxi, 3.

**32. All the trouble... that hath come upon us**—Literally, *all the distress which has found us*; that is, the woes and judgments which had come upon them in consequence of their sins.

in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but 'we have done wickedly: **34** Neither have our kings, our princes, our priests, nor our fathers, kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them. **35** For they have 'not served thee in their kingdom, and in 'thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and 'fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works. **36** Behold, 'we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the good thereof, behold, we are servants in it: **37** And 'it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have 'dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.

**38** And because of all this we 'make

*t* Psa. 106. 6; Dan. 9. 5; 6. 8.—*u* Deut. 28. 47.—*v* Verse 25.—*w* Verse 25.—*x* Deut. 28. 48; Ezra 9. 9.—*y* Deut. 28. 33, 51.—*z* Deut. 28. 48.—*r* 2 Kings 23. 3; 2 Chron. 29. 10; 34. 31; Ezra 10. 3; chap. 10. 29.

THE SEALED COVENANT, ix, 38-x, 27.

**38. Because of all this**—In view of the people's profound humiliation and penitence, as expressed in the preceding prayer. This verse properly belongs to chapter x. **We make a sure covenant**—For the purpose of preserving and perpetuating the excellent feeling that now prevailed, the whole community entered at once into a written covenant to separate themselves from the heathen and remain true to Jehovah. **Seal unto it**—The word rendered *seal* is the passive participle *sealed*, and is evidently used in the sense of *sealed instrument*. Thus, literally, and upon the sealed, (document,) were our princes, Levites, priests; that is, the sealed instrument bore their names or signatures. Such solemn sealing of documents to ratify a treaty or covenant has been a custom in all ages.

## CHAPTER X.

**1. Now those that sealed were, Nehemiah**—Literally, *And upon the sealed instruments were Nehemiah*, etc. It was important that the heads of houses or families, and chief repre-

sentatives of the nation, should sign the document. First came the name of the governor, *the Tirshatha*. See note on Ezra ii, 63. Next is the name *Zidkijah*, perhaps the secretary to the governor, (compare Ezra iv, 9, 17,) or else some other high official. Then follow (verses 2-8) twenty-one names of *priests*, seventeen *Levites*, (verses 9-13,) and forty-four of *the chief of the people*, (verses 14-27.)

## CHAPTER X.

**N**OW <sup>1</sup>those that sealed were, <sup>a</sup>Nehemiah, <sup>2</sup>the Tirshatha, <sup>b</sup>the son of Hachaliah, and Zidkijah, <sup>2</sup><sup>c</sup>Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, <sup>3</sup>Pashur, Amariah, Malchijah, <sup>4</sup>Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, <sup>5</sup>Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, <sup>6</sup>Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, <sup>7</sup>Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, <sup>8</sup>Maaziah, Bilgai, Shemaiah: these were the priests. <sup>9</sup>And the Levites: both Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel; <sup>10</sup>And their brethren, Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelitah, Pellaiah, Hanan, <sup>11</sup>Michea, Rehob, Hashabiah, <sup>12</sup>Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, <sup>13</sup>Hodijah, Bani, Beninu. <sup>14</sup>The chief of the people; <sup>d</sup>Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zathu, Bani, <sup>15</sup>Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,

*s* Chap. 10. 1.—<sup>15</sup> Heb. are at the sealing, or, sealed.—<sup>1</sup> Heb. at the sealings. chap. 9. 38.—*a* Chap. 8. 9.—<sup>2</sup> Or, the governor.—*b* Chap. 1. 1.—*c* See chap. 12. 1-21.—*d* See Ezra 2. 3, &c.; chap. 7. 8, &c.

sentatives of the nation, should sign the document. First came the name of the governor, *the Tirshatha*. See note on Ezra ii, 63. Next is the name *Zidkijah*, perhaps the secretary to the governor, (compare Ezra iv, 9, 17,) or else some other high official. Then follow (verses 2-8) twenty-one names of *priests*, seventeen *Levites*, (verses 9-13,) and forty-four of *the chief of the people*, (verses 14-27.)

**2. Seraiah** is called in chap. xi, 11, "the ruler of the house of God," and Keil supposes he signed the document in place of the high priest. **Azariah** is probably a clerical error, or corruption of *Ezra*. Compare the list in chap. xii, 1-7.

**14. Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam**—These and other names in this list are identical with names found in the list of those who returned from the captivity nearly a hundred years before. Ezra ii; Neh. vii. Thus in many houses ancestral names were perpetuated in the children. But we are not to suppose that the persons named in this list were identical with those of the same names in the older list of Ezra ii.

**16** Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, **17** Ater, Hizkijah, Azzur, **18** Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, **19** Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, **20** Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, **21** Meshezabeel, Zadok, Jaddua, **22** Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, **23** Hosheah, Hananiah, Hashub, **24** Hallohesh, Pileha, Shobek, **25** Rehun, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, **26** And Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, **27** Malluch, Harim, Baanah.

**28** And the rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the porters, the singers, the Nethinim, and all they that had separated themselves from the people of the lands unto the law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, every one having knowledge, and having understanding; **29** They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath,

*e* Ezra 2. 36-43. — *f* Ezra 9. 1; 10-12. 19: chap. 13. 3. — *g* Deut. 29. 12, 14; chap. 5. 12, 13: Psa. 119. 106. — *h* 2 Kings 23. 3; 2 Chron. 34. 31. — *i* Heb. *by the hand of*. — *j* Exod. 34. 16; Deut. 7. 3; Ezra 9. 12, 14.

#### OATH OF THE PEOPLE TO KEEP THE LAW, 28-31.

**28. The rest of the people**—Those represented by the heads of the nation who had sealed the covenant. While their chiefs sealed the covenant the people bound themselves, by a most solemn oath, to observe all that the covenant contemplated—to observe all the law.

**29. Entered into a curse, and into an oath**—Bound themselves by publicly uttered vows, and invoked upon themselves the curse of God should they prove unfaithful to their oaths.

**31. We would not buy... on the sabbath**—Such breaking of the Sabbath had prevailed among them before this. **Or on the holy day**—The day of any of the great religious festivals, on which the law forbade all servile work. Num. xxix, i 7, 12. **Seventh year**—See the law in Exod. xxiii, 11; Lev. xxv, 4. **Exaction of every debt**—Literally, *the debt of every hand*. "So called either because the debtor promised to pay by giving his right hand, or because the hand is the instrument and emblem of deposit, trust. Some editions read here נשך, *burden*, which is less well."—*Gesenius*. See the law in Deut. xv, 1, 2.

to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes; **30** And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons: **31** And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

**32** Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God; **33** For the showbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new

*k* Exodus 20. 10; Leviticus 23. 3; Deuteronomy 5. 12; chap. 13. 15, &c. — *l* Exodus 23. 10, 11; Leviticus 23. 4. — *m* Deuteronomy 15. 1, 2; chapter 5. 12. — *n* Hebrew, *every hand*. — *o* Leviticus 24. 5, &c.; 2 Chronicles 2. 4. — *p* Numbers 28. 29.

#### PROVISION FOR THE TEMPLE SERVICE, 32-39.

Having entered into a solemn covenant to keep the law, it was necessary that the people make provision for the support and regular observance of the holy service at the house of God. Such arrangements were accordingly made without delay.

**32. We made ordinances**—Laws, rules, regulations. Nehemiah writes in the name of the whole community. **The third part of a shekel**—About eighteen cents, the silver shekel being valued at fifty-three cents. This was according to the law which ordained that half a shekel should be annually paid for the support of the holy service by every man twenty years old and upwards. See Exod. xxx, 13-16. In view of the poverty of the people, it was now lowered to one third of a shekel, but later it was raised again to a half shekel. Matt. xvii, 24.

**33. The showbread**—Which was to be prepared of fine flour, and set in two rows in the holy place of the house of God. See Lev. xxiv. 5-9. **The continual meat offering, and... burnt offering**—Two lambs a day, one in the morning, and the other at evening. Num. xxviii, 3-8. **Of the sabbaths**—The burnt offering pre-

moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

**34** And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law: **35** And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the

house of the LORD: **36** Also the first-born of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: **37** And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our

*p* Chap. 13. 31; Isa. 40. 16.—*q* Lev. 6. 12.—*r* Exod. 23. 19; 34. 26; Lev. 19. 23; Num. 18. 12; Deut. 26. 2.—*s* Exod. 13. 2, 12, 13; Lev.

27. 26, 27; Num. 18. 15, 16.—*t* Lev. 23. 17; Num. 15. 19; 18. 12, &c.; Deut. 18. 4; 26. 2.—*u* Lev. 27. 30; Num. 18. 21, &c.

scribed for every sabbath. See Num. xxviii, 9, 10. **Of the new moons**—See Numbers xxviii, 11–14. **The set feasts**—The passover, the feasts of trumpets, and the feast of tabernacles. Num. xxviii, 16–29, 39. **For the holy things**—The holy or consecrated gifts, such as oxen and sheep, which were to be used in sacrifice, (compare 2 Chron. xxix, 33,) and also other offerings that might be used in the holy services. **For the sin offerings**—Especially on the great day of atonement. Lev. xvi, 29–34; xxiii, 27–32. **All the work**—All the divine service. They provided for all that was necessary to insure the regular performance of the temple service according to the law. When Ezra first went up from Babylon to Jerusalem, Artaxerxes decreed that provision for the house of God should be made from the royal treasure-house, (Ezra vii, 20–23;) but it is probable that this arrangement had ceased, and the service of the temple had become much neglected. Hence Nehemiah's reforms.

**34. Cast the lots**—See note on Josh. xiii, 6. **The wood offering**—Large quantities of wood were necessary to the continual burnt offerings, and some provision must have been made for it from the first. The law (Lev. vi, 12) said, "The fire upon the altar shall be burning in it; it shall not be put out; and the priest shall burn wood on it every morning," etc.; but we find in the law no specific precept for providing wood for the altar. Josephus (*Wars of the Jews*, ii, 17, 6)

mentions "the festival of Xylophory, (*ξύλοφοριών*, wood-bearing,) upon which the custom was for every one to bring wood for the altar, that there might never be a want of fuel for that fire which was to be always burning." **At times appointed year by year**—Probably several days each year were set apart for this purpose, for Bertheau's opinion, that there was but one day in the year for bringing wood, has no support. Keil thinks that "the order was settled for several years, and not that all the different houses contributed in each year." The Mishna, as quoted by Lightfoot, (*Hor. Heb.*, on Matt. i, 1,) says: "The seasons for wood-carrying by the priests and people were nine. The first of Nisan, for the sons of Erach, the son of Judah; the twentieth of Tammuz, for the sons of David, the son of Judah; the fifth of Ab, for the sons of Parosh, the son of Judah; the seventh of the same month for the sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab; the tenth of the same for Sennaah, the son of Benjamin," etc.

**35. To bring the firstfruits**—Compare marginal references. The true Israelite sought to dedicate the first and best of all things to his God.

**36. The firstborn of our sons**—To be redeemed, according to the law of Num. xviii, 15, 16. **As it is written in the law**—Compare, for all these items, the marginal references.

**37. The firstfruits of our dough**—The "wave loaves" described in Lev. xxiii, 17. **The tithes**—For these were holy to Jehovah. Lev. xxvii, 30.

tillage. **38** And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, <sup>v</sup> when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to <sup>w</sup> the chambers, into the treasurehouse. **39** For the children of Israel and the children of Levi <sup>x</sup> shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where *are* the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister, and the porters, and the singers:

<sup>ø</sup> Num. 18, 26.—<sup>u</sup> 1 Chron. 9, 26; 2 Chron. 81, 11.—<sup>w</sup> Deut. 12, 6, 11; 2 Chron. 31, 12; Chap.

<sup>y</sup> and we will not forsake the house of our God.

## CHAPTER XI.

**A**ND the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem <sup>a</sup> the holy city, and nine parts *to dwell* in other cities. **2** And the people blessed all the men, that <sup>b</sup> willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

13, 12.—<sup>y</sup> Chap. 13, 10, 11.—<sup>a</sup> Verse 18; Matt. 4, 5; 27, 53.—<sup>b</sup> Judges 5, 9.

**38. The priest... shall be with the Levites**—To superintend the tithing, and see that **the tithe of the tithes** was duly placed in the treasury of the temple for the priests, the sons of Aaron. See the law in Numbers xviii, 26-28. **The chambers**—Hezekiah had prepared chambers in which to store tithes in the first temple, (2 Chronicles xxxi, 11, 12,) and similar ones were again provided after the exile.

**39. We will not forsake the house**—By failure to provide wood, and offerings, and tithes, according to the law. This covenant also bound the priests and Levites to their proper work of seeing that the temple service was constantly attended to, and that no man left his post of duty. We find in chap. xiii, 10, 11, that this covenant was soon after broken. Backsliding followed reform.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM INCREASED, 1, 2.

According to chap. vii, 4, 5, the nation had assembled at Jerusalem to reckon its numbers and devise some plan for increasing the population of the city, which was large and but thinly peopled. Nehemiah improved the occasion, first of all, to instruct the people in the law, and observe the feasts of the seventh month, and also make provision for the regular observance of the temple service. The people were brought to feel their oneness, and caught again the enthusiasm and zeal of the true old theocratic spirit.

Having devoted the three chapters preceding to a narration of those most important facts, the writer now proceeds to tell in a few words how the population of the holy city was increased.

**1. The rulers... dwelt at Jerusalem**—A noble example. While the city was exposed to dangerous attacks, and the inhabitants were few and feeble, the rulers stood at their posts of duty. So at a later day, when persecution drove all the Christian population from Jerusalem, the apostles remained there still. Acts viii, 1. **The rest of the people**—That is, all the people who were not residents of Jerusalem. **One of ten**—A tithe of the people. According to the register of chap. vii, the whole congregation numbered forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty. This number had probably not greatly varied since the time of Zerubbabel, and the population of the city was probably increased by not far from four thousand persons. **The holy city**—Jerusalem; so called from being the seat of the temple and of the national worship, and the center of numerous holy associations.

**2. The men, that willingly offered themselves**—Those who, being chosen by lot, willingly consented to remove their residence to Jerusalem. The words do not imply that any on whom the lot fell showed unwillingness to remove to the holy city. Doubtless all who were thus chosen cheerfully acquiesced, and, consulting not their own security so much as the public good, received the blessings of a grateful people.

3 Now these *are* the chief of the province that dwelt in Jerusalem: but in the cities of Judah dwelt every one in his possession in their cities, *to wit*, Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and <sup>a</sup>the Nethinim, and <sup>a</sup>the children of Solomon's servants. 4 And <sup>a</sup>at Jerusalem dwelt *certain* of the children of Judah, and of the children of Benjamin. Of the children of Judah; Athaiah the son of Uzziash, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalaleel, of the children of <sup>a</sup>Perez; 5 And Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni. 6 All the sons of Perez that dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred threescore and eight valiant men. 7 And these *are* the sons of Benjamin; Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Peduiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jesaiah. 8 And after him Gabbai, Sallai, nine hundred twenty and eight. 9 And Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer: and Judah the son of Senuah *was* second over the city. 10 <sup>b</sup>Of the

priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin. 11 Seraiah the son of Milkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zaddock, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the ruler of the house of God. 12 And their brethren that did the work of the house *were* eight hundred twenty and two: and Adaiash the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchiah, 13 And his brethren, chief of the fathers, two hundred forty and two: and Amashai the son of Azareel, the son of Ahasai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, 14 And their brethren, mighty men of valour, a hundred twenty and eight: and their overseer *was* Zabdiel, <sup>1</sup>the son of *one* of the great men. 15 Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hashub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; 16 And Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chief of the Levites, <sup>2</sup>*had* the oversight of <sup>1</sup>the outward business of the house of God. 17 And Mattaniah the son of Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, *was* the principal to begin <sup>a</sup>the thanksgiving in prayer: and Bakkukiah the second among his brethren,

<sup>c</sup> 1 Chron. 9. 2, 3. — <sup>d</sup> Ezra 2. 43. — <sup>e</sup> Ezra 2. 55. — <sup>f</sup> 1 Chron. 9. 3, &c. — <sup>g</sup> Gen. 38. 29, *Pharez*. — <sup>h</sup> 1 Chron. 9. 10, &c.

<sup>1</sup> Or, *the son of Haggadolim*. — <sup>2</sup> Heb. *were over*. — <sup>i</sup> 1 Chron. 26. 29; Acts 6. 2, 3. — <sup>k</sup> Phil. 4. 6; 1 Thess. 5. 18.

#### LIST OF THE CHIEFS OF THE PROVINCE, 3-16.

A comparison of this list with that of 1 Chron. ix, (where see notes,) shows that they both agree in their plan, and in a considerable number of their names. The differences are too many to allow the opinion that the lists are substantially identical, and that each is an imperfect transcript of an older and fuller catalogue of names. The list in Chronicles contains, according to its heading, the names of those who first settled in their possessions after the exile; the present list is of later date, and belongs to the times of Nehemiah.

3. **The chief of the province**—The chiefs or heads of families who represented the entire province of Judea in the time of Nehemiah. This *province* was then one of the subdivisions of the Persian empire. **But in the cities of Judah**—Rather, *and in the cities of Judah*. The list contains the names of chief fathers dwelling in

other cities of the province as well as in Jerusalem. See verses 25-36. **Israel**—This word here denotes the entire body of the covenant people, (the laity, so to speak,) exclusive of the four special classes next named.

14. **Son of one of the great men**—So the Septuagint and Vulgate read, but incorrectly. The Hebrew is to be taken as a proper name, *son of Haggadolim*.

16. **The outward business of the house of God**—Not the same as "the outward business over Israel," which was done in the capacity of "officers and judges." 1 Chron. xxvi, 29. It was a business that had special relation to the temple, but its exact nature is at present matter of conjecture. We naturally suppose that it consisted in care for the buildings and furniture, and the collection and arrangement of provisions for the temple service.

17. **The principal to begin the thanksgiving**—He was the precentor and chief musician, like Asaph, men-

and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. **18** All the Levites in <sup>l</sup>the holy city were two hundred fourscore and four. **19** Moreover the porters, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren that kept <sup>m</sup>the gates, were a hundred seventy and two. **20** And the residue of Israel, of the priests, and the Levites, were in all the cities of Judah, every one in his inheritance. **21** <sup>n</sup>But the Nethinim dwelt in <sup>o</sup>Ophel: and Ziba and Gispa were over the Nethinim. **22** The overseer also of the Levites at Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God. **23** For <sup>p</sup>it was the king's commandment concerning them, that <sup>q</sup>a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day. **24** And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabeel, of the children of <sup>r</sup>Zerah the son of Ju-

<sup>l</sup>Verse 1; Dan. 9. 24; Matt. 27. 53.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. at the gates.—<sup>m</sup> See chap. 3. 26.—<sup>4</sup> Or, The tower.—<sup>n</sup> See Ezra 6. 8, 9; 7. 20, &c.—<sup>5</sup> Or, a sure ordinance.

tioned in 1 Chron. xvi. 5. **Bakbukiah the second**—Second in rank; next in position and authority to Mattaniah.

**21. Dwelt in Ophel**—See on chap. iii, 26.

**23. The king's commandment**—The king here referred to is not David, who originally arranged and made provision for the Levites, (1 Chron. xxiii-xxvi,) but the Persian king, Artaxerxes, who gave *commandment concerning them* to Ezra. Compare his decree, Ezra vii, 12-26. **A certain portion**—אֵמֶנָה, a firm, or sure agreement, a covenant. The English version gives the view of many interpreters, who understand that a stipulated allowance of food was granted to the singers. But the Hebrew may be thus literally rendered: *and an agreement was upon the singers, a matter of day in its day*. That is, the singers were bound by a settled agreement to perform a certain amount of service on each particular day. Each day had its own matter of service for these singers. Perhaps, however, the thought of allowance may also be included.

**24. Pethahiah... at the king's hand**—That is, at the court of the Persian monarch. He was at the king's

dah, was <sup>p</sup>at the king's hand in all matters concerning the people. **25** And for the villages, with their fields, *some* of the children of Judah dwelt at <sup>q</sup>Kirjath-arba, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Dibon, and *in* the villages thereof, and at Jekabzeel, and *in* the villages thereof, **26** And at Jeshua, and at Moladah, and at Bethphelet, **27** And at Hazar-shual, and at Beersheba, and *in* the villages thereof, **28** And at Ziklag, and at Mekonah, and *in* the villages thereof, **29** And at Enrimmon, and at Zareah, and at Jarmuth, **30** Zanoah, Adullam, and *in* their villages, at Lachish, and the fields thereof, at Azekah, and *in* the villages thereof. And they dwelt from Beersheba unto the valley of Hinnom. **31** The children also of Benjamin <sup>r</sup>from Geba dwelt <sup>s</sup>at Michmash, and Aija, and <sup>t</sup>Bethel, and *in* their villages, **32** And at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, **33** Hazor, <sup>u</sup>Ramah, Gittaim,

<sup>o</sup> Genesis 38. 30, Zarah.—<sup>p</sup> 1 Chronicles 18. 17; 23. 28.—<sup>q</sup> Joshua 14. 15.—<sup>6</sup> Or, of Geba.—<sup>7</sup> Or, to Michmash.—<sup>r</sup> Genesis 28. 19.—<sup>s</sup> Matthew 2. 18.

hand as a private counsellor, having in charge all the interests of the Jewish people. He was allowed frequent access to the king, and so *in all matters concerning the people* he must have been a most important and responsible agent and representative of his nation at the seat of government.

**25. And for the villages**—Or we may render, *now in respect to the villages*. The writer thus turns to an enumeration of the towns or villages of the province in which children of Judah and Benjamin dwelt. **Kirjath-arba**—The same is Hebron. See on Josh. x, 3. **Dibon** is probably identical with the *Dimonah* of Josh. xv, 22, and **Jekabzeel** with the *Kabzeel* of Josh. xv, 21; towns in the extreme south of Judah, whose sites have not been clearly identified.

**26-35.** On **Moladah**, see Josh. xv, 26. **Beer-sheba**—Josh. xv, 28. **Ziklag**—1 Sam. xxvii, 6. **Jarmuth**—Josh. xv, 35. **Lachish**—Josh. x, 3. **Valley of Hinnom**—Josh. xv, 8. **Geba**—Josh. xviii, 24. **Michmash**—1 Sam. xiii, 2. **Aija and Beth-el**—Josh. vii, 2. **Anathoth**—Josh. xxi, 18. **Nob**—1 Sam. xxi, 1. **Ananiah**—Perhaps the modern Beit Hanina, some three

**34** Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, **35** Lod, and Ono, 'the valley of craftsmen. **36** And of the Levites were divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin.

## CHAPTER XII.

NOW these are the <sup>a</sup> priests and the Levites that went up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: <sup>b</sup> Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, <sup>2</sup> Amariah, <sup>1</sup> Malluch, Hattush, <sup>3</sup> <sup>2</sup> Shechaniah, <sup>4</sup> Rehum, <sup>4</sup> Meremoth, <sup>4</sup> Iddo, <sup>5</sup> Ginnetho, <sup>c</sup> Abijah, <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> Miamin, <sup>7</sup> Maadiah, Bilgah, <sup>8</sup> Sheaniah, and Joiarib, Jedaiah, <sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, Jedaiah. These were the chief of the priests and of their brethren in the days of <sup>a</sup> Jeshua. <sup>8</sup> Moreover the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sher-

ebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, <sup>a</sup> which was over <sup>a</sup> the thanksgiving, he and his brethren. <sup>9</sup> Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, were over against them in the watches. <sup>10</sup> And Jeshua begat Joiakim, Joiakim also begat Eliashib, and Eliashib begat Joiada, <sup>11</sup> And Joiada begat Jonathan, and Jonathan begat Jaddua. <sup>12</sup> And in the days of Joiakim were priests, the chief of the fathers: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; <sup>13</sup> Of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; <sup>14</sup> Of Melicu, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; <sup>15</sup> Of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; <sup>16</sup> Of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; <sup>17</sup> Of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai; <sup>18</sup> Of Bilgah, Shammua; of

<sup>a</sup> 1 Chron. 4. 14.—<sup>a</sup> Ezra 2. 1, 2.—<sup>b</sup> See chap. 10. 2-3.—1 Or, Melicu, verse 14.—2 Or, Shebaniah, verse 14.—3 Or, Hurim, verse 15.—4 Or, Meraioth, verse 15.—5 Or, Ginnethon, verse 16.

<sup>c</sup> Luke 1. 5.—6 Or, Miniamin, verse 17.—7 Or, Moadiah, verse 17.—8 Or, Sallai, verse 20.—<sup>d</sup> Ezra 3. 2: Hagzal 1. 1: Zech. 3. 1.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 11. 17.—9 That is, the psalms of thanksgiving.

miles northwest of Jerusalem. **Ramah**—Josh. xviii, 25. **Gittaim**—2 Sam. iv, 3. **Hadid**—Perhaps the modern Haditheh, a few miles east of Lod, or Lydda. **Neballat**—The modern Beit Nebala, a little northeast of Lod. **Lod and Ono**—Lod is the *Lydda* of the New Testament, (see on Acts ix, 32,) and Ono is probably to be sought at Kefr Auna, a few miles north of it. See on chapter vi, 2. **The valley of craftsmen** is, perhaps, identical with *the plain of Ono*, mentioned chap. vi, 2. Compare 1 Chron. iv, 14. The other towns mentioned in this section are unknown.

**36. Divisions in Judah, and in Benjamin**—Rather, *divisions of Judah to Benjamin*. That is, divisions of Levites that had previously belonged to the tribe of Judah by having their homes in that tribe, were now assigned to Benjamin. This was probably done to equalize or rectify the proportion of Levites to each tribe.

## CHAPTER XII.

## LISTS OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES, 1-26.

In these verses we have, first, the list of priests and Levites that went up from Babylon with Zerubbabel, 1-9; next follows a genealogy of the high

priests from Jeshua to Jaddua, 10-11; then the names of the chief fathers of the priestly houses in the days of Joiakim, 12-21; and, finally, sundry statements concerning the Levites, 22-26.

It will be observed that the names in verses 1-9 appear again with but a few changes in verses 12-21, and many of them are also identical with names in the list of chapter x, 1-13. According to Keil, "the difference between the names in the two lists of chapters x and xii is to be explained simply by the fact that the names of those who sealed the covenant, chap. x, are names neither of orders nor houses, but of heads of houses living in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Of these names a portion coincides, indeed, with the names of the orders and houses, while the rest are different. The sameness of names does not, however, prove that the individuals belonged to the house whose name they bore. On the contrary, it appears from xii, 13, 16, that of two Meshullams, one was the head of the house of Ezra, the other of the house of Ginnethon."

The names of the priests in verses 1-7 are twenty-two, all descendants of Jedaiah, Immer, Pashur, and Harim, named in chapter vii, 39-42. According to the Talmud, "four divisions of priests returned from captivity, namely, Jeda-

Shemaiah, Jehonathan; **19** And of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; **20** Of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; **21** Of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethaneel. **22** The Levites in the

days of Eliashib, Joiada, and Johanan, and Jaddua, were recorded chief of the fathers: also the priests, to the reign of Darius the Persian. **23** The sons of Levi, the chief of the fathers, were writ-

iah, Harim, Pashur, and Immer. These the prophets of the returned captives again divided into twenty-four; whereupon their names were written upon tickets and put in an urn, from which Jedaiah drew five, and each of the other three before-named divisions as many. It was then ordained by those prophets that even if the division of Jehoiarib (1 Chron. xxiv, 7) should return, Jedaiah should, nevertheless, retain his position, and Jehoiarib should be associated with him." In all this we observe how the returned exiles struggled to restore and preserve their ancient institutions and orders.

**22. The Levites... to the reign of Darius the Persian**—The grammatical connexion of the parts of this verse it is difficult to determine. The whole verse seems to be the heading or superscription of a list of names, and, indeed, the whole passage (verses 22-26) has a fragmentary aspect, like disconnected parts of some more extensive document. It is evident from this verse that a register of the chief fathers of the priests and Levites was kept until the reign of Darius. But who was this *Darius the Persian*? According to Josephus, (*Ant.* xi, 8, 4, 5,) **Jaddua** was the name of the high-priest who was contemporary with Alexander the Great, the conqueror of Darius Codomannus. This Darius was the last king of Persia, and must have reigned so long after the time of Nehemiah, that if the *Jaddua* of this verse was his contemporary, this passage must have been written later than the age of the supposed author of this book.

There are three methods of obviating these difficulties: 1.) This verse may have been inserted by a later hand. Into a passage so aphoristic as this, such an interpolation might have easily crept. This supposition is favoured by the insertion of "and" before the name of *Johanan*, as if that name had

originally ended the list; and also by the mention, in the next verse, of Chronicles that were continued to "the days of Johanan." 2.) The *Jaddua* of this verse may have been a different person from the one mentioned by Josephus as contemporary with Alexander. 3.) Most interpreters identify this *Darius the Persian* with Darius Nottus, who, after a few months of anarchy in the royal family, succeeded his father, Artaxerxes Longimanus, and reigned nineteen years. Nehemiah might easily have been living in his day, and the *Jaddua* of Josephus might have been then a young man. For, according to chap. xiii, 28, Joiada had in Nehemiah's time a son who was married, and, therefore, the oldest son. Johanan might have begotten Jaddua some years before this. Accordingly in bringing down these registers to his own time, Nehemiah recorded the name of Jaddua as then living and prospectively high priest, though not yet in office.

If these representatives of four successive generations in the high priest's family were all living at one time, we may see a reason for thus recording their names even though one or more of them had not yet entered upon his office. One of the sons of the high priest had married Sanballat's daughter, and erected a false worship on Mount Gerizim; and such a pollution in the priesthood may have shaken the faith of many a pious Jew. But it would restore confidence to note the remarkable providence of God in preserving at such a time four generations of high priests to look each other in the face at once.

**23. The sons of Levi**—This expression comprehends both priests and Levites, and is therefore more general than the term *the Levites*, which is used in distinction from *the priests*. **The book of the Chronicles**—Not our present book of "Chronicles," but the

ten in the book of the 'Chronicles, even until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib. **24** And the chief of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brethren over against them, to praise and to give thanks, <sup>g</sup> according to the commandment of David the man of God, <sup>h</sup> ward over against ward. **25** Mattaniah, and Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, Akkub, were porters keeping the ward at the <sup>i</sup> thresholds of the gates. **26** These were in the days of

Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah <sup>j</sup> the governor, and of Ezra the priest, <sup>k</sup> the scribe.

**27** And at <sup>l</sup> the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, <sup>m</sup> both with thanksgivings, and with singing, *with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.* **28** And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country

<sup>f</sup> 1 Chron. 9. 14, &c.—<sup>g</sup> 1 Chron. chaps. 23. 25, 26.—<sup>h</sup> Ezra 3. 11.—<sup>i</sup> Or, *treasuries*, or, *assemblies*.

<sup>j</sup> Chapter 8. 9.—<sup>k</sup> Ezra 7. 6, 11.—<sup>l</sup> Deut. 20. 5; Psalm 30. title.—<sup>m</sup> 1 Chronicles 25. 6; 2 Chron. 5. 13; 7. 6.

public annals of the Jewish nation, from which all these registers were probably derived. **Until the days of Johanan**—The preceding verse mentions registers kept until the reign of Darius the Persian, a date apparently later than the time of Johanan; and this favours the opinion of some that the mention of Darius and Jaddua is a later interpolation. But if this Persian king were Darius Nothus, then his reign and the days of Johanan were contemporaneous, and Nehemiah himself may have written these words.

**24. The commandment of David**—See 1 Chron. xvi. 4; xxiii. 30. **Ward over against ward**—One company of singers opposite another company, so as to worship antiphonally. See note on Ezra iii. 11.

**25. The thresholds of the gates**—Rather, *treasuries*, or *store chambers of the gates*; chambers located near the gates, and used for the storing of temple goods. Comp. 1 Chron. xxvi. 15, note.

DEDICATION OF THE WALL OF JERUSALEM, 27–43.

All the details and genealogical lists from chapter vii up to this point were, in some sense, preparatory to the dedication of the walls of the holy city. Upon the completion of the walls the Jews' enemies were humiliated, and devised crafty measures to put Nehemiah in fear. Chap. vi. 15–19. Thereupon Nehemiah at once proceeded to organize and consolidate the new community, and to thoroughly provide for their civil and religious interests. He

carefully collected the genealogical registers, assembled the whole nation for public instruction in the law, made all needful provision for the temple service, and for a large increase of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Thus Nehemiah and Ezra were like another Moses and Aaron to lead, organize, and instruct their nation after its deliverance from the second "house of bondage." The dedication of the restored walls of their capital followed most fittingly after the nation had become thoroughly organized and consolidated, and the priestly and Levitical houses had learned their proper places and work.

The date of the dedication of the wall is quite uncertain. The close connexion of this account with Nehemiah's later reforms, (ver. 44, and chap. xiii. 1,) seems to place it after Nehemiah's absence in Persia. And it is very possible that for reasons now unknown this dedication of the wall was hindered, or postponed, till after Nehemiah returned from Persia.

**27. They sought the Levites**—Having been duly registered and organized for service, the Levites dwelling in the various cities of Judah outside of Jerusalem could easily be summoned to keep the dedication. Only a part of the Levites dwelt in Jerusalem, chapter xi. 15–18. The rest had their places assigned them in the province. **Cymbals, psalteries**—See on 1 Sam. x. 5, and 2 Sam. vi. 5.

**28. The plain country**—*The ciccar*, (הַקָּר) The word is always elsewhere applied to the Jordan valley,

round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi; **29** Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth: for the singers had builded them villages round about Jerusalem. **30** And the priests and the Levites <sup>a</sup> purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall. **31** Then I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall, and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks, *whereof* <sup>o</sup> one went on the right hand upon the wall <sup>p</sup> toward the dung gate: **32** And after them went Hoshai, and half of the princes of Judah,

<sup>n</sup> Job 1. 5; Heb. 5. 1, 3. — <sup>o</sup> See verse 38.  
<sup>p</sup> Chap. 2. 13; 3. 13.

but the additional phrase **round about Jerusalem** has led most interpreters to understand here the country immediately around Jerusalem. Keil, however, with good reason, adheres to the established usage of the word. **Villages of Netophathi**—Towns in the vicinity of Netopha, a village apparently in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, (comp. chap. vii, 26; 1 Chron. ii, 54,) but not yet with certainty identified. Some suggest its identity with Beit Nettif, about fifteen miles southwest of Jerusalem.

**29. House of Gilgal**—Or *Beth-gilgal*; probably the modern Jiljilia, about half way between Jerusalem and Shechem. **Geba**—See on Joshua xviii, 24. The site of **Azmaveth** is unknown. **The singers had builded them villages**—That is, new villages or towns, in the immediate vicinity of those just named.

**30. Purified themselves... people... gates... wall**—This was probably done by the sprinkling of water, (Num. xix, 18,) and the offering of sacrifices. Compare 2 Chron. xxix, 21.

**31. The princes of Judah** are here, as usual, the political chiefs or representatives of the new community. It was important for all these, as well as for Nehemiah himself, to appear in the great processions which were so prominent a part of the ceremonies of the day. **Two great companies of them that gave thanks**—Or, *two great choirs*. One of these was to go, as a body of musicians, before each of the great processions. **One went on the**

**33** And Azariah, Ezra, and Meshulam, **34** Judah, and Benjamin, and Shamaiah, and Jeremiah, **35** And *certain* of the priests' sons <sup>a</sup> with trumpets; *namely*, Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph: **36** And his brethren, Shemaiah, and Azarael, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethaneel, and Judah, Hanani, with <sup>r</sup> the musical instruments of David the man of God, and Ezra the scribe before them. **37** <sup>s</sup> And at the fountain gate, which was over against them, they went up by <sup>t</sup> the

<sup>q</sup> Num. 10. 2, 8. — <sup>r</sup> 1 Chron. 3. 5. — <sup>s</sup> Chap. 22. 14; 3. 15. — <sup>t</sup> Chap. 3. 15.

**right... toward the dung gate**—The two processions seem to have started near the valley gate, (chap. ii, 13,) and this one going southward, passed round the southwestern corner of the city, near which was the *dung gate*. See on chap. ii, 13; and Plan, page 444.

**32–34. Hoshai** was probably a leading chief among these **princes of Judah**. Keil maintains that all the names in verses 33 and 34 are the names of *princes*; while others hold that they are names of *priests*, being identical with priestly names occurring elsewhere in this book. This latter argument, however, is not conclusive, for princes might have names identical with certain priests, and the special designation of “priests’ sons” in verse 35 seems rather to confirm the view of Keil. **Ezra**, here, is not the distinguished priest and scribe who is mentioned in verse 36; and **Judah and Benjamin** are not the names of the tribes, but of individuals among the princes. The name *Judah* occurs again in verse 36 among the priests’ sons.

**36. The musical instruments of David**—Such instruments as David invented, and introduced into the sacred service. Comp. 1 Chron. xv, 16; xxiii, 5; 2 Chron. xxix, 26.

**37. At the fountain gate**—Near the pool or fountain of Siloam. Chap. iii, 15. **Which was over against them**—Rather, *and before them*, (נגדם,) referring not to the position of the gate but to the advance of the procession. The word is here used as in

stairs of the city of David, at the going up of the wall, above the house of David, even unto <sup>a</sup>the water gate eastward. **38** <sup>v</sup> And the other *company of them that gave thanks* went over against *them*, and I after them, and the half of the people upon the wall, from beyond <sup>w</sup>the tower of the furnaces even unto <sup>x</sup>the broad wall; **39** <sup>v</sup> And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above <sup>y</sup>the old gate, and above <sup>z</sup>the fish gate, <sup>a</sup>and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto <sup>b</sup>the sheep gate: and they stood still in <sup>c</sup>the prison gate. **40** So stood the two *companies of them*

<sup>u</sup> Chap. 3. 26; 8. 1, 2, 16. — <sup>v</sup> See verse 31. — <sup>w</sup> Chapter 3. 11. — <sup>x</sup> Chapter 3. 8. — <sup>y</sup> 2 Kings 14. 13; chap. 8. 16.

Josh. vi, 5, 20, in the sense of *straight forwards*. The procession passed by the fountain-gate, and *straight forwards they went up by the stairs of the city of David*. These stairs were situated somewhere on the eastern slope of Zion. Chap. iii, 15. **At the going up of the wall**—Or, *in the ascent to the wall*. The exact meaning is difficult to determine. The reference may be to some ascent by which the procession moved up to the wall, or went up upon it; or to some rise of ground over which the wall itself was built. Bertheau thinks it was an ascent by which the procession mounted upon the wall, having descended from it at some previous point. **Above the house of David**—The probable meaning is, opposite to the building or place where David once had his royal dwelling. **Unto the water gate**—Somewhere in the vicinity of the bridge over the Tyropœon, which connected mounts Zion and Moriah. Chap. iii, 26. It opened upon a broad street in which the people gathered to hear the law read. Chap. viii, 1. In this broad place, perhaps, both processions united, and marched together to the house of God. Verse 40.

**38. The other . . . went over against**—That is, on the opposite side of the city. As the first company went to the right, (verse 31,) these went to the left, following the wall around, until both processions met near the **water gate**. **Tower of the furnaces** . . . **broad wall**—See notes on chapter ii, 8, 11.

*that gave thanks* in the house of God, and I, and the half of the rulers with me: **41** And the priests; Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; **42** And Maaseiah, and Shemaiah, and Eleazar, and Uzzi, and Jehohanan, and Malchijah, and Elam, and Ezer. And the singers <sup>11</sup>sang loud, with Jezrahiah *their* overseer. **43** Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

<sup>z</sup> Chap. 3. 6. — <sup>a</sup> Chap. 3. 3. — <sup>b</sup> Chap. 3. 1. — <sup>c</sup> Chap. 3. 32. — <sup>d</sup> Jer. 32. 2. — <sup>11</sup> Heb. *made their voice to be heard*.

**39 Gate of Ephraim**—In the northern wall, opening out in the direction of Ephraim's territory. See on 2 Kings xiv, 13. **Old gate . . . sheep gate**—See Plan, page 444, and notes on chap. iii, 1, 3, 6. **Stood still in the prison gate**—Came to a halt at that point. The position of the *prison gate* is uncertain, but was probably near the south-western corner of the temple area, and not far from the water gate, where the other procession halted. See on verse 37.

**40. So stood**—Rather, *and they stood*. The two processions probably united in the street before the water gate, or else in the temple area, and at once proceeded into the courts of the temple, where they *stood* and worshipped together.

**43. Joy of Jerusalem**—The joy of the people over their completed work, and the prospect of peace and prosperity. Their hosannas, says Wordsworth, "may be caught up and re-echoed by us, when we look forward to the time when the Church militant will have encircled the world, and have completed her mission in preaching the Gospel and in building up her walls; and when the two companies of Gentile and Jew will meet together at the heavenly Zion, and join in one song of united praise to God. Then will the saints see the jewelled walls, and the gates of pearl, and the streets of pure gold, of the heavenly Jerusalem, (Rev. xxi, 11-21,) and will sing hallelujahs to God and the Lamb, and dwell forever there."

**44** \*And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the tithes, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities the portions <sup>12</sup> of the law for the priests and Levites: <sup>13</sup> for Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites <sup>14</sup> that waited. **45** And both the singers and the porters kept the ward of their God, and the ward of the purification, <sup>1</sup> according to the command-

<sup>e</sup> 2 Chron. 31. 11, 12; chap. 13. 5, 12, 13.—<sup>12</sup> That is, *appointed by the law*.—<sup>13</sup> Heb. *for the joy of Judah*.—<sup>14</sup> Heb. *that stood*.

### SECTION THIRD.

### NEHEMIAH'S LATER REFORMS.

CHAPTERS XII, 44—XIII, 31.

#### LEVITICAL APPOINTMENTS, 44—47.

**44. At that time**—This seems certainly to refer to the time of the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem, and hence some have very naturally supposed that the wall was not dedicated till after the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes, when Nehemiah came the second time to Jerusalem. See introductory note before verse 27. **Chambers for the treasures**—Store chambers; rooms in the temple for the storing of such things as **offerings... firstfruits, ... tithes**, which were gathered in for the support of the sacred services. It was necessary for certain responsible persons to have charge of these important chambers and their stores. **Fields of the cities**—The suburbs or outlying fields that were attached to the different cities of Israel. The Israelites lived not on their lands, but in cities, from which they went forth at seed-time and harvest to sow and reap. So the fields of Boaz were in the vicinity of Bethlehem, but he abode in the city. **Portions of the law**—That is, portions prescribed by law for the priests and Levites. See Num. xviii, 20—24; Deut. xviii, 1—8. **Judah rejoiced for the priests**—That is, had great joy and comfort in their ministry and service, and gave willingly for their support. **That waited**—Literally, *the ones standing*; that is, standing to minister before the Lord. Compare Deut. x, 8.

ment of David, and of Solomon his son. **46** For in the days of David <sup>a</sup> and Asaph of old *there were* chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God. **47** And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and the porters, every day his portion: <sup>b</sup> and they <sup>15</sup> sanctified *holy things* unto the Levites; <sup>1</sup> and the Levites sanctified *them* unto the children of Aaron.

<sup>f</sup> 1 Chron. chaps. 25. 26.—<sup>g</sup> 1 Chron. 25. 1, &c.; 2 Chron. 29. 30.—<sup>h</sup> Num. 18. 21, 24.—<sup>15</sup> That is, *set apart*.—<sup>i</sup> Num. 18. 26.

**45. Kept the ward of their God**—Or, *kept the charge of their God*; looked after all the sacred interests committed to their oversight and care. Compare Lev. viii, 35. **The ward of the purification**—The charge of “the purifying of all holy things.” 1 Chron. xxiii, 28. The rooms and vessels of the temple were to be purified, and called for the special appointment of persons for that work. **According to the commandment of David**—See 2 Chron. viii, 14; and comp. 1 Chron. xxv—xxvi.

**46. For in the days of David and Asaph**—So these Levitical appointments were no new invention of Nehemiah, but a restoration of a usage old as the times of David. The “and” before *Asaph* seems to be a clerical error. It is better to read, *In the days of David Asaph was chief*, etc.

**47. Gave the portions**—The tithes and other contributions necessary for the support of the singers and porters. **They sanctified holy things unto the Levites**—They set apart, as things consecrated to holy uses, the portions designed for the Levites. Instead of *holy things* it is better simply to substitute *them*, referring to the *portions* just named. **And the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron**—The Levites were required to give a tithe of the tithes (compare chap. x, 38) to the priests, here called *sons of Aaron*. So of all the tithes committed to them they set apart a tenth for the priests. “Ye also shall offer a heave offering unto the Lord of all your tithes,” etc. See the law in Num. xviii, 26—29.

## CHAPTER XIII.

**O**N that day <sup>a1</sup> they read in the book of Moses in the <sup>2</sup> audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever; <sup>2</sup> Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but <sup>c</sup> hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: <sup>d</sup> howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing. <sup>3</sup> Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, <sup>e</sup> that they sep-

<sup>a</sup> Deuteronomy 31. 11, 12; 2 Kings 23. 2; chap. 8. 3, 8; 9. 3; Isaiah 34. 16.—<sup>1</sup> Hebrew, *there was read*.—<sup>2</sup> Hebrew, *ears*.—<sup>b</sup> Deuteronomy 23. 3, 4.—<sup>c</sup> Numbers 22. 5; Joshua 24. 9, 10.

## CHAPTER XIII.

THE SEPARATION FROM STRANGERS,  
1-3.

1. **On that day**—This is to be understood in the same sense as *at that time*, in chap. xii, 44. But no doubt public readings of the law took place frequently during Nehemiah's administration. **The book of Moses**—Here it is evident that the Book of Deuteronomy, from which they read on that occasion, was regarded as the work of Moses. Its Mosaic authorship was not questioned in Nehemiah's day. **Found written**—The passage referred to is in Deut. xxiii, 3-6, and reads as follows: "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord forever: because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee. Nevertheless the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee. Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days forever."

3. **They separated from Israel all the mixed multitude**—Literally, *separated all mixture from Israel*. The word מִצְרָא, *mixed multitude*, is used of the people of foreign blood who accompanied the Hebrews out of Egypt, (Exod. xii, 38,) and afterwards lusted

after from Israel all the mixed multitude.

4 And before this, **Elishib the priest**, <sup>3</sup> having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, *was* allied unto Tobiah: <sup>5</sup> And he had prepared for him a great chamber, <sup>1</sup> where aforetime they laid the meat offerings, the frankincense, and the vessels, and the tithes of the corn, the new wine, and the oil, <sup>2</sup> which was commanded *to be given* to the Levites, and the singers, and the porters; and the offerings of the priests.

<sup>d</sup> Num. 23. 11; 24. 10; Deut. 23. 5.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 9. 2; 10. 23.—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *being set over*, chap. 12. 44.—<sup>f</sup> Chap. 12. 44.—<sup>g</sup> Num. 18. 21, 24.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *the commandment of the Levites*.

after flesh. Num. xi, 4. It may, therefore, refer to any non-Israelitish people. So according to the true spirit of the law they separated themselves from *all* foreigners, not from Ammonites and Moabites only. Marriage with unbelievers is fraught with so much danger that it is discountenanced in the New Testament also. 2 Cor. vi, 14. Inter-marriage and association with foreigners was an evil against which both Ezra and Nehemiah had to fight repeatedly. Compare verses 23-30, and chap. ix, 2; also Ezra ix-x, notes.

## CLEANSING OF THE CHAMBER OCCUPIED BY TOBIAH, 4-9.

4. **Before this**—Before the separation of the mixed multitude from Israel. **Elishib the priest**—The high priest mentioned in chap. iii, 1. **Oversight of the chamber**—"Such oversight of the chambers of the temple would certainly be intrusted to no simple priest, though this addition shows that this oversight did not form part of the high priest's office."—*Keil*. **Allied unto Tobiah**—In what particular way is unknown. Perhaps the Jewess whom his son Johanan had married (vi, 18) was a relative of the high priest. See on chaps. ii, 10; vi, 18.

5. **Great chamber**—Formed, probably, as Piscator suggests, by removing the partitions from several contiguous chambers, and thus throwing them all into one. The variety of stores **aforetime** kept in these chambers confirms this view, as well as the mention of *chambers* in verse 9. Tobiah used it as a dwelling, verse 8.

■ But in all this *time* was not I at Jerusalem: <sup>h</sup> for in the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon came I unto the king, and <sup>a</sup> after certain days <sup>e</sup> obtained I leave of the king: 7 And I came to Jerusalem, and understood of the evil that Eliashib did for Tobiah, in <sup>i</sup> preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. 8 And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. 9 Then I commanded, and they <sup>k</sup> cleansed the cham-

<sup>h</sup> Chap. 5. 14. — <sup>6</sup> Heb. *at the end of days*.  
<sup>6</sup> Or, *I earnestly requested*. — <sup>i</sup> Verses 1, 5.  
<sup>e</sup> 2 Chron. 29. 5, 15, 16, 18.

6. All this time was not I at Jerusalem—Else such profanation of the temple would not have been tolerated. **Two and thirtieth year**—After having been governor of Jerusalem for twelve years. See chapter v, 14. **King of Babylon**—Artaxerxes is so called, because he ruled all the dominions of the ancient kingdom of Babylon. See note on Ezra vi, 22. **Came I unto the king**—When Nehemiah left the Persian court he set a time for his return, chapter ii, 6, note. The time originally set may have been extended, but after twelve years' absence, loyalty to the king required his return to the court. **After certain days**—Hebrew, *at the end of days*; an indefinite period, perhaps several years. **Obtained I leave**—The Hebrew indicates that he obtained leave of absence this second time only by an earnest petitioning. See margin.

8. I cast forth all the household stuff—The violence of the act was expressive of his indignation and grief. The mention of *household stuff* shows that Tobiah had used the chamber for his residence while at Jerusalem.

9. Cleansed the chambers—By carrying forth all the filthiness, and sanctifying them again to holy uses. Comp. 2 Chron. xxix, 5, 15, 16, 18.

THE PORTIONS OF THE LEVITES RESTORED, 10–14.

10. The portions... had not been given—The arrangements narrated in chap. xii, 44–47 had not been carried out, and consequently the ministers of the temple had been obliged to flee

bers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense.

10 And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had <sup>l</sup> not been given *them*: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to <sup>m</sup> his field. 11 Then <sup>n</sup> contended I with the rulers, and said, <sup>o</sup> Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their <sup>r</sup> place. 12 <sup>p</sup> Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil

<sup>l</sup> Mal. 3. 8. — <sup>m</sup> Num. 35. 2. — <sup>n</sup> Verses 17, 25; Prov. 28. 4. — <sup>o</sup> Chap. 10. 39. — <sup>p</sup> 7 Heb. *standing*. — <sup>r</sup> Chap. 10. 38, 39; 12. 44.

every one to his field, in order to procure sustenance for himself. The evil example of the high priest had spread demoralization among all the Levites, and we have the dark picture of this corruption of priests and people vividly presented to us in the prophecy of Malachi.

11. The rulers—Whose duty it was to see that the tithes were collected, and the temple service properly sustained. **Why is the house of God forsaken**—They had bound themselves not to forsake the house of God, chapter x, 39, where see note. Nehemiah now demands why they have violated that solemn covenant. **I gathered them**—That is, gathered the Levites, who had gone to seek sustenance in the fields of their cities, (verse 10,) and restored them to their proper places in the temple service.

12. Then brought all Judah the tithe—No doubt the words of the prophet Malachi, (iii, 10,) as well as those of the governor, were instrumental in bringing about this result. The prophet charged them with robbing God, but at the same time reminded them of Jehovah's long-suffering and mercy: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Nehemiah's rebuke was effectual, the prophetic challenge of Malachi was accepted, and a blessed reformation was wrought.

unto the <sup>8</sup>treasuries. **13** <sup>9</sup>And I made treasurers over the treasures, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and <sup>9</sup>next to them was Hanan the son of Zaçcur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted <sup>9</sup>faithful, and <sup>10</sup>their office was to distribute unto their brethren. **14** <sup>10</sup>Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my <sup>11</sup>good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the <sup>12</sup>offices thereof.

**15** In those days saw I in Judah some treading winepresses <sup>1</sup>on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all *manner of burdens*, <sup>2</sup>which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and <sup>3</sup>I testified *against them*

<sup>8</sup> Or, *storehouses*.—<sup>9</sup> 2 Chron. 31. 12; chap. 12. 44.—<sup>9</sup> Hebrew, *at their hand*.—<sup>10</sup> Chap. 7. 2; 1 Cor. 4. 2.—<sup>10</sup> Hebrew, it was *upon them*.—<sup>8</sup> Verse 22, 31; chap. 5. 19.—<sup>11</sup> Hebrew, *kindnesses*.

**13. I made treasurers**—Thus re-establishing what he had himself done once before. Chapter xii, 44. **Shelemiah...Zadok**—Probably the same mentioned in chap. iii, 29, 30. They were probably aged men of unsullied character, and, therefore, **counted faithful**, and fit to be trusted with this responsible work.

**14. Remember me**—Comp. chap. v, 19, note. **Wipe not out**—Nehemiah conceives of his work as recorded in a book, and prays that it may not be erased, nor blotted out and forgotten. Having been wrought and registered, he desired that it might stand. "He does not say, Publish to the world my good deeds, but, Wipe them not out; he does not say, Reward me, but, Remember me—the prayer of the penitent on the cross."—*Wordsworth*. **Good deeds**—Hebrew, *kindnesses*; that is, pious acts, springing out of tender regard for the house of God. **Offices thereof**—That is, its usages and rites.

SABBATH DESECRATION STOPPED, 15–22.

**15. Treading winepresses**—The press consisted of two vats, one situated higher than the other. The grapes were trodden in the higher vat, from which the expressed juice ran into the lower one. Dr. Robinson found

in the day wherein they sold victuals. **16** There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. **17** <sup>16</sup>Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? **18** <sup>17</sup>Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath. **19** And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem <sup>18</sup>began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: <sup>19</sup>and some of my servants

<sup>12</sup> Or, *observations*.—<sup>1</sup> Exodus 20. 10.—<sup>2</sup> Chap. 10. 31; Jer. 17. 21, 22.—<sup>3</sup> Deut. 8. 19; 2 Chron. 24. 19; Psa. 50. 7; Micah 6. 3.—<sup>4</sup> Verse 11.—<sup>5</sup> Jer. 17. 21–23.—<sup>6</sup> Lev. 23. 32.—<sup>7</sup> Jer. 17. 21, 22.

an ancient winepress a few miles east of Antipatris. It had been dug in a ledge of rock, the upper vat being eight feet square and fifteen inches deep, and the lower four feet square by three feet deep. The treading of the winepress **on the sabbath** was an express violation of the fourth commandment, (Exod. xx, 8–11,) and also strange forgetfulness of a recent covenant. Chapter x, 31.

**16. There dwelt men of Tyre**—These Tyrians are not to be understood as having permanent abodes in Jerusalem, but dwelling only temporarily there in order to carry on the traffic here mentioned.

**18. Did not your fathers thus**—The prophet Jeremiah had occasion to rebuke his people for this same evil. "Thus saith the Lord; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in

set I at the gates, *that* there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day. **20** So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice. **21** Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye <sup>13</sup>about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath. **22** And I commanded the Levites, that <sup>a</sup>they should cleanse

<sup>13</sup> Heb. *before the wall?*—*a* Chap. 12. 30.  
—*c* Vers. 14, 31.—14 Or, *multitude*.—15 Heb.

at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched."

### 20. Lodged without Jerusalem

—This enabled them to carry on their impious traffic to some extent without the gates, and, as Keil observes, "because egress from the city could not be refused to the inhabitants, the rest of the Sabbath was broken outside the gates."

### 21. I will lay hands on you—

Proceed to violent measures, and arrest and treat you as criminals.

### 22. The Levites . . . should cleanse themselves—

By certain ceremonies, as in chap. xii, 30. **Come and keep the gates—**Literally, *coming keeping the gates*. The meaning is, that in addition to the ordinary gate keepers, certain Levites were detailed to see that the gates of the city were properly guarded during the Sabbath. A reason for this may have been the moral influence which the sacred character of the Levites would be supposed to exert. **To sanctify the sabbath day—**That is, to secure its sanctity by preventing further profanation, like that mentioned in verses 15 and 16.

### FOREIGN MARRIAGES DISSOLVED, 23-31.

"The sin of mixed marriages was one of the crying sins of the Jews at this time. The greatness of the sin arose from the fact that it tended to defeat one of the purposes of the Mosaic economy. God isolated the Jews from all other nations that they might be a nursery for the great ideas of re-

themselves, and *that* they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. <sup>b</sup>Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the <sup>14</sup>greatness of thy mercy.

**23** In those days also saw I Jews *that* <sup>15</sup>had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: **24** And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and <sup>16</sup>could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language

*had made to dwell* with them.—*c* Ezra 9. 2.  
—16 Heb. *they discerned not to speak*.

ligion that were to be elaborated in the history of the world, and a stock from which he would bring forth the Messiah. All mingling with other nations, who had not been trained in this way and preserved for this purpose, tended to defeat this design. Especially was this true of matrimonial alliances. Heathen women retained a natural longing for the indulgences of their own religion, and easily led their husbands into guilty compliances. The women of Moab and Philistia, and the wives of Solomon, furnish mournful proofs of this fact. They led their infatuated husbands and paramours into the grossest idolatry. They, therefore, who chose heathen wives, thereby rejected the God of Israel."—*T. V. Moore*.

**23. Saw I Jews—**That is, he observed, or his attention was called to, certain Jews who had contracted foreign marriages. Perhaps he observed this during some journey through the province, for these Jews seem not to have lived in Jerusalem. **Had married wives—**Literally, *had caused to dwell*. An expression originating in the custom of the husband's bringing his wife home to dwell in his own house. **Ashdod—**One of the principal cities of the Philistines. See on Josh. xi, 22.

**24. The speech of Ashdod—**Supposed to have been an Indo-Germanic language. **Not speak . . . Jews' language—**Hebrew, and none of them *knowing to speak Jewish*. The children would naturally speak the language of their mothers. **According to the language of each people—**Better, as margin, *of people and people*; that is, of

of each people. **25** And I<sup>d</sup> contended with them, and <sup>18</sup> cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them<sup>e</sup> swear by God, *saying*, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. **26** Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet<sup>g</sup> among many nations was there no king like him,<sup>h</sup> who was beloved of his God, and God made

<sup>17</sup> Hebrew, *of people and people*.—*d* Verse 11; Proverbs 28. 4.—<sup>18</sup> Or, *reviled them*.—*e* Ezra 10. 5; chapter 10. 29, 30.—*f* 1 Kings 11. 1, &c.

this or that people to whichsoever the mother belonged. "From the circumstance that a portion of the children of these marriages were not able to speak the language of the Jews, but spoke the language of Ashdod, or of this or that nation from which their mothers were descended, we may conclude with tolerable certainty that these people dwelt neither in Jerusalem nor in the midst of the Jewish community, but on the borders of the nations to which their wives belonged."—*Keil*.

**25. I contended with them**—By rebuke and expostulation, as he had done with the rulers and nobles. Vers. 11, 17. **Cursed them**—Comp. Mal. iii. 9. He went beyond mere expostulation, and pronounced them cursed of God in having thus violated the Divine law. **Smote certain of them**—As governor he had them scourged as public offenders. Compare Deut. xxv, 2, 3. **Plucked off their hair**—A penalty designed to be both painful and disgraceful. The offence was too great to be allowed to pass without severe treatment. **Made them swear**—As Ezra had made the people, guilty of the same offence, do some years before. Ezra x, 5. **Not give your daughters**—The principal members of the community had taken the same oath during Nehemiah's administration, (chapter x, 30;) but, perhaps, the ones now guilty were not among that number.

**26. Outlandish women**—That is, *foreign* women. The word *outlandish*, from the Anglo-Saxon *utlendisc*, is now obsolete in the sense in which it is here used. The reference to Solomon was

him king over all Israel: <sup>1</sup> nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. **27** Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to <sup>2</sup> transgress against our God in marrying strange wives? **28** And *one* of the sons <sup>1</sup> of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, *was* son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. **29** Remember them, O my God, <sup>19</sup> because they have defiled the priesthood,

<sup>g</sup> 1 Kings 3. 13; 2 Chron. 1. 12.—<sup>h</sup> 2 Sam. 12. 24.—<sup>i</sup> 1 Kings 11. 4, &c.—<sup>k</sup> Ezra 10. 2.—<sup>l</sup> Chap. 12. 10, 22.—<sup>m</sup> Chap. 6. 14.—<sup>19</sup> Heb. *for the defilings*.

exceedingly appropriate. See 1 Kings xi, 1-9.

**27. Shall we then hearken unto you**—Shall we hear to you, that is, in the sense of accepting your views, and consenting to your evil action in this matter? Less simple, we think, is the construction of Bertheau and Keil, who take *וְאַתָּה* as third person, Niphal:

*for you is it hard to do*, etc.; that is, is it not unheard of for you to do so great an evil?

**28. One of the sons of Joiada**—Not Jonathan or Johanan, (chapter xii, 11, 22,) but a younger and less prominent member of the high priest's family. The fact, however, that he was a son of the high priest made the matter of his foreign marriage the more notorious, and called for the greater severity on the part of the governor. **Sanballat**—See on chapter ii, 10. **I chased him from me**—Expelled and banished him from the province of Judea. Josephus (*Antiq.*, xi, 7, 2) relates this incident of Manasseh, a brother of Jaddua, and places it in the reign of Darius Codomannus the last king of Persia. In this, as in some other things, he seems to have fallen into a confusion of names and dates. He also relates how the excommunicated priest went over to Sanballat and became high priest of the Samaritan temple which was built upon Mount Gerizim.

**29. Remember them**—All who were involved in the sin of Joiada's son. **They... defiled the priesthood**—By being parties in the contraction of this marriage with a foreign woman.

and <sup>a</sup>the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. **30** <sup>o</sup>Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and <sup>p</sup>appointed the wards of the priests and the Le-

*n* Mal. 2. 4, 11, 12. — *o* Chap. 10. 30. — *p* Chap.

It were sinful—a breach of the law—for any Israelite to marry a heathen wife, much more so for a son of the high priest to do it. The law expressly forbade a high priest to marry a widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, or harlot, or any but a virgin of his own nation. Lev. xxi, 14. Hence this marriage of the high priest's son was a breach of the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. Compare Mal. ii, 1-8. For though this apostate son of Joiada were not himself high priest, his marriage with

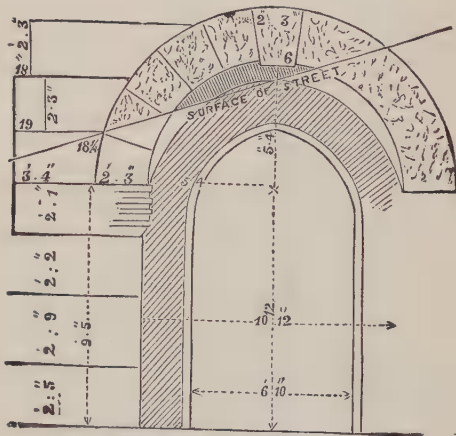
vites, every one in his business; **31** And for <sup>a</sup>the wood offering, at times appointed, and for the firstfruits. <sup>r</sup>Remember me, O my God, for good.

12. 1, &c. — *q* Chap. 10. 34. — *r* Verses 14, 22.

a foreign woman was a stigma on his father's family.

**30. Thus cleansed I them**—This verse is a concluding summary of Nehemiah's reforms. **Appointed the wards**—See chap. xii, 44-47.

**31. For the wood offering... and for the firstfruits**—See chap. xii, 44, and x, 34, 38. **Remember me, O my God, for good**—Thus Nehemiah closes his narrative with the pious prayer of a soul conscious of earnest and self-sacrificing labour for the cause of God.



MODERN GATE OF GENNATH.

As shown by recent excavations in Jerusalem.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

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## General Character of the Work.

**THIS** book takes its name from the distinguished woman who is the heroine of its narrative. It is called by the Jews *the Megillah*, (מִגִּילָה) or *Roll* of Esther, from its being written on a special roll. In our Bibles it stands as the last of the historical books, but in the Hebrew Canon it is placed in the Hagiographa, between the Books of Ecclesiastes and Daniel.

The book belongs to the latest Hebrew literature of the Old Testament, and is to be classed, in respect to age, with the Books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. But in character it is altogether unique. It reads like an oriental romance. The great king, sitting on "the throne of his kingdom," holding the golden sceptre, revelling in every carnal luxury and pleasure, feasting thousands of nobles and princes, and knowing no bounds to extravagance and folly; the palace, the court of the garden, the various coloured awnings attached to marble pillars, the tessellated pavement, and the couches of gold; the magnificent robes and royal splendour of the chief ministers of State—all these pass before us like the visions of enchantment.

Though commemorating events of the greatest interest to the Jews, it is noticeably wanting in the high theocratic spirit which is so conspicuous in the other historical books of Israel. The name of God, it has often been remarked, is not once mentioned. No yearning for the fatherland of the exiles, as in Daniel, Ezra, and Nehemiah; no reference to temple, priest, or sacrifice, is to be found; but rather an effort on the part of both Mordecai and Esther to conceal their Jewish origin, in order to obtain favour and advancement in the Persian court.

These facts would naturally subject the Book of Esther to a vast amount of criticism; and the enemies of the Bible have not failed to make the most of them. They have also averred that the whole narrative breathes a revengeful spirit, that many of the acts attributed to Ahasuerus are incredible and absurd, and that the elevation of a Jew to be prime minister of Persia is without parallel or evidence in history. All objections based on particular parts of the narrative will be noticed in the textual notes; other questions involved in the criticism of the book may be more conveniently discussed in this Introduction.

### Credibility.

The work is certainly characterized by a spirit different from that of the other sacred books, but this fact, instead of being an objection to its truly historical character, is rather an evidence in its favour. A writer born and bred at Shushan, the Persian capital, would not be likely to be very familiar with Jewish institutions, especially as they existed in Palestine and at Jerusalem; and in composing a history of the origin of the feast of Purim, he had no occasion to make mention of other Jewish institutions. The same reserve and policy which he describes in Mordecai and Esther, in concealing their Jewish origin, may have influenced him as a writer. He shows a reticence in treating of his religion, and an untheocratic spirit unusual for a Jew of any age or country; but this very fact is a weighty argument for the authenticity and genuineness of his work. This is the more strikingly seen when we compare his work with the later and spurious additions to it which are found in the Apocrypha. The author of these apocryphal additions seems to have felt the lack of the theocratic spirit in this ancient book, and aimed to supply what he supposed was wanting.

The feast of Purim, universally observed at the present day, is a monumental evidence of the truth of this history. It has been confessedly observed by the Jews since the times of the Persian empire. In 2 Maccabees xv, 36 it is called *Mordecai's Day*; and Josephus writes that it was carefully observed in his time. The name *Purim* admits of no other explanation than that furnished in this book. Here, then, is the same kind of evidence as the passover furnishes to the truth of the Exodus, or that our celebration of the fourth of July yields to the historical fact of the Declaration of Independence.

Another evidence of its credibility is, the intimate acquaintance which the author shows with Persian customs and the Persian court. The royal palace and its garden, to which so much interest has been given in recent years by the exhuming of the great hall at Susa, with its "pillars of marble," the use of vessels and couches of gold, the levity and drinking at the feast, the "seven princes," the many Persian names throughout the book, the eunuchs and the harem, the conspiracy against the king and its punishment, the impaling of offenders, the royal posts, the inviolability of Medo-Persian laws, and the capricious acts of the king—these and other things are all in perfect keeping with what we learn of Persian life and customs from Herodotus and other sources. No person writing at a later age, and far removed from the scenes he describes, could have incorporated all these things into a fictitious narrative with such an unconscious simplicity and accuracy. Then, too, the parts of the narrative which have been pro-

pronounced incredible and absurd a romance writer would have been careful to avoid. He would have seen their absurdity as quickly as any of his critics, and would never have ventured the publication of a work so full of falsehood and folly. Hence additional evidence of the credibility of this history may be found in the identification of the monarch who reigned at Shushan, and did the things ascribed to him in this book. We pass, then, to inquire—

### Who was Ahasuerus?

In the endeavour to answer this question, almost every king of Persia, from Darius the Mede down to Darius Nothus has had his claims urged by different writers and by a variety of arguments. The Book of Esther itself furnishes data which clearly exclude every Persian or Medo-Persian monarch before Darius Hystaspes. For of Ahasuerus it must be observed, 1) That his royal residence was Shushan; 2) His dominion extended "from India even unto Ethiopia," that is, from the river Indus to the Upper Nile; 3) He reigned at least twelve years, (Esther iii, 7;) 4) He reigned at a period when the Persians had pre-eminence over the Medes. This last is seen in the writer's use of the term Persian and Medes, (chap. i, 3, 14, 18, 19,) naming Persia first, and thereby implying Persian supremacy. The passage in chap. x, 2, is no real exception, for there the book of national annals is mentioned, in which the records of Media doubtless chronologically preceded those of Persia. In the Book of Daniel, written earlier, and near the time when Darius the Median took the kingdom, we find this expression reversed, and written Medes and Persians, (Dan. v, 28; vi, 8, 12, 15; viii, 20.) In Daniel's vision of the ram which had two horns, and symbolized the Medo-Persian empire, the Persian horn was higher than the other, and came up last. Dan. viii, 3. The Persian kings, from Darius Hystaspes downward, made Shushan their principal residence; but Achmetha, (Ezra vi, 2,) or Ecbatana, was the royal residence of the kings of Media. Ahasuerus, then, could have been no Median king, and no Mede ever ruled from India unto Ethiopia. Neither did Cyrus, the first Persian monarch, extend his dominion to Ethiopia. Cambyses, the son of Cyrus, was the first to extend the Persian empire as far as Ethiopia, but he never returned alive from that expedition, and his whole reign was less than eight years. Smerdis, the Magian, reigned less than a year; so that all these kings who preceded Darius Hystaspes are excluded from further discussion. Neither is it possible to identify Ahasuerus with any Persian monarch later than Artaxerxes Longimanus, for with Darius Nothus the Persian empire seriously declined, and his reign of nineteen years was a constant scene of insurrections and revolts.

The discussion is thus narrowed to three Persian kings—Darius Hystaspes, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes Longimanus—each of whom had his royal residence at Shushan, reigned more than twelve years, and ruled from the Indus to the Upper Nile.

According to Josephus, Prideaux, and some recent critics, Esther's Ahasuerus is to be identified with Artaxerxes, surnamed by the Greek historians Longimanus—the long-handed. This monarch was the patron of Ezra and Nehemiah, and it may seem plausible to suppose that Esther was the queen who sat by his side when Nehemiah sought permission to go to build the city of his fathers' sepulchres. Neh. ii, 6. But this opinion is quite generally rejected, and for the following reasons: 1. Artaxerxes was certainly not the first who reigned from India to Ethiopia. His two next immediate predecessors ruled over the same extent of country, and either of them was in other respects more illustrious than he. Hence it would hardly be proper to designate him as specially famous from the extent of his dominion. 2. He seems to have lived too late to be contemporary with Mordecai and Esther. According to Esther ii, 5, Mordecai's great-grandfather, Kish, was taken captive to Babylon with Jeconiah (that is, Jehoiachin) in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar. Compare 2 Kings xxiv, 12. From that date to the beginning of Artaxerxes' reign was about one hundred and fifty years, too long a period to be naturally measured by four generations. Esther may easily have been a youthful virgin at the beginning of Xerxes' reign, or during the reign of Darius Hystaspes; but she must have been far advanced in life in Artaxerxes' time, and Mordecai could scarcely have been living. Then, 3. The general character of Artaxerxes for clemency and magnanimity, and his attitude toward the Jews, are very incompatible with what is recorded of Ahasuerus. It is hardly credible that the king who, in his seventh year, sent a colony of Jewish exiles to their fatherland, and issued for their benefit a decree so comprehensive and favourable as that recorded in Ezra vii, 11-26, would, in his twelfth year, yield, without a word, to Haman's infamous proposal for the universal massacre of this same race of people. 4. It is also difficult to understand why the sacred writer should call Artaxerxes Ahasuerus. The names are not cognate, and if they were different names of the same individual, the sacred writer would have been very likely to have said so.

Mr. Tyrwhitt devotes a large work to the discussion of this question, and argues that Ahasuerus must be identified with Darius Hystaspes. He urges that Darius was the first of the Persian kings who ruled from India to Ethiopia, and that his generation was contemporary with that of Esther, so that he neither died too early nor was born too late to

have seen her in her bloom of youth. The tribute laid, after his twelfth year, "upon the land, and upon the isles of the sea," (Esther x, 1,) could not have been laid after the twelfth year of Xerxes, or of Artaxerxes, because at that date "the isles of the sea" had become free from Persian control. Hence Darius Hystaspes was the only Persian monarch who could have exacted such a tribute subsequent to the twelfth year of his reign. This writer also labours to show that Esther is to be identified with Atossa, whom Darius married after his accession to the throne of Persia. Herodotus vii, 2. He regards Hadassah (Esther ii, 7) as the court name of the queen, and urges its identity with *Atossa*. To the objection that Atossa was the daughter of Cyrus, and widow of Cambyses, he replies by the supposition that "daughter of Cyrus" is a regal title of the principal wife, and equivalent to "daughter of the sun."

But this hypothesis, and the whole argument of Mr. Tyrwhitt, fails to meet the following objections: 1) The first six years of his reign Darius could hardly be said to rule from India to Ethiopia. Those years were one continued scene of revolts, and the new king was kept constantly employed in reducing the provinces, one after another, to submission. 2) The supposition that "daughter of Cyrus" is only a regal title is inadmissible in face of Herodotus' explicit statement, (Bk. iii, 88,) that Atossa was not only daughter of Cyrus, but sister of Cambyses, and had been married to her own brother, and also to the Magian usurper, previous to her marriage with Darius. These facts utterly forbid her identification with the Jewish maiden Hadassah, even though the names seem to be exact equivalents. 3) Another insuperable difficulty in identifying Ahasuerus with Darius is the noticeable contrast in their characters. Darius Hystaspes was distinguished for persevering energy, caution, sagacity, and prudence—qualities entirely wanting in the capricious and passionate tyrant presented to us in the Book of Esther. We find it difficult to conceive such a warlike and sagacious monarch as Darius manipulated and controlled by such a rash and unprincipled favourite as Haman. 4) Add to all this, that under the favourable rule of Darius the Jews resumed and completed the building of their temple at Jerusalem, and the king issued a most memorable decree in their interest, warning and admonishing the enemies to refrain from all interference with their affairs. Ezra vi. 5) It is also difficult to give any reason why this king should be called Darius in the Book of Ezra, and Ahasuerus in the Book of Esther. If these names belonged to the same person we certainly should expect to find some intimation of it in one or the other of these books.

We seem from the above argument to be shut up to the conclusion that Ahasuerus was Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius Hystaspes.

None of the objections we have urged against Darius and Artaxerxes can be made against Xerxes. We notice, 1) The resemblance in name. The form of the name is in Hebrew *Akhashverosh*, and in Persian, as it appears in the cuneiform inscriptions, *Khshayarsha*. This latter the Greeks would very naturally abridge and express by *Xerxes*. 2) It is generally agreed among all expositors that Xerxes is the fourth king described in the prophecy of Daniel, (xi, 2,) "There shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia." This corresponds very noticeably with what is said of the extent of Ahasuerus' empire, and "the riches of his glorious kingdom." Though his father Darius, and his son Artaxerxes, ruled over the same territory, neither of them possessed it so securely, or made such a world-wide display of power and riches, as did Xerxes. 3) But especially is it to be observed of Xerxes that his capricious temper, passionate violence, ostentatious prodigality, and unblushing licentiousness, find a complete parallel in the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther.

Mr. Tyrwhitt seeks to invalidate this evidence for Xerxes by a variety of arguments, all of which, however, are easily shown to be inconclusive. 1) He attempts to prove that Esther could not have been a youthful virgin in the seventh year of Xerxes, but he seems not to have observed that his argument assumes that the members of the fourth generation from Kish were all of the same age. Mordecai was Esther's cousin, and also her foster-father. He "brought her up;" and it is easy to understand that of these, as of other cousins, one might have been a mere child when the other had attained mature manhood. 2) A greater difficulty in identifying Xerxes with the husband of Esther is the fact that before and after the seventh year of his reign his wife was the cruel and licentious Amestris. No one would now think of identifying Esther with Amestris, and there is no need of supposing that Vashti and Amestris were the same. It is not necessary to suppose that either Vashti or Esther was the principal wife of the king. They may have been only favourite and highly-honoured concubines, on whom the king at times delighted to set the royal crown. It is a well-known fact that the Persian kings had many wives and many concubines. But the wives were selected from royal houses, (*Herod.*, iii, 84,) not indiscriminately from the virgins of the provinces. Hence the gathering of fair young virgins from all parts of the empire shows that it was not a queen consort that was sought, but a favourite concubine. It is no more strange that such a favourite should be honoured with a royal crown, and allowed to preside at feasts in the royal house, than that a favourite officer of the court should be clothed

with the royal apparel, and ride on the king's horse, and have a noble prince lead him through the streets and cry, "Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour." 3) Again, Esther was introduced to Ahasuerus in the seventh year of his reign. But according to Herodotus, the seventh year of Xerxes must have been the year he returned defeated into Asia. For he spent the second year of his reign in subjugating a rebellion in Egypt, (*Herod.*, vii, 7, 8,) and was four years making his preparations to invade Greece, (*Herod.*, vii, 20,) so that it must have been in the sixth year of his reign when he set out on the expedition, and he could not well have returned to his capital within less than two years. This would bring us to the close of the seventh or the beginning of the eighth year of his reign. Moreover, Esther and the other maidens were required to go through a twelve months' preparation before they saw the king. Thus, according to the chronology of Herodotus, it would seem that the earliest date at which Esther could have been introduced to Xerxes was near the close of the eighth year of his reign.

Here, indeed, is a difficulty, but a few considerations will show that it is far from weighty, and affords no conclusive objection to identifying Xerxes with Ahasuerus. 1) The order for gathering the virgins from all the provinces unto Shushan was probably made before Xerxes set out on his Grecian campaign, and during the two years of his absence they were being sought out and brought under the custody of the king's chamberlain. See notes on chap. ii, 1, 16. 2) The chronology of Herodotus is not to be assumed as absolutely correct. His dates may be often considerably out of the way. 3) And especially should we bear in mind in such an argument that Jewish and Greek writers might easily have adopted different methods of reckoning, so that the seventh year of one would be the eighth year of another.

The objection that no isles of the sea were subject to Xerxes after the twelfth year of his reign is sufficiently noticed in the note on chap. x, 1.

We conclude, then, that Esther's Ahasuerus was no other than Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius Hystaspes. The difficulties in the way of this identification are few and of little weight, while the arguments in its favour are many and striking. But the objections to identifying Ahasuerus with any other monarch seem to be insuperable.

This identification is a weighty argument for the historical truth of the Book of Esther. Even De Wette admits that the summoning of Vashti to a carousal, Esther's marriage with the king, though not of the families of the seven princes, Haman's edict, to destroy the Jews, and Mordecai's counter edict, are all possible under Xerxes' rule; and

Rawlinson well remarks: "Had the work been composed by a Jewish romancer, at the distance of a century and a half or two centuries from the events, and been merely based upon traditional recollections of a great danger and a great deliverance, (which is the hypothesis of De Wette and Davidson,) it is inconceivable that the character of Xerxes should have been hit off so exactly, and that the picture of Persian manners should have been at once so vivid and so correct."

### Date and Authorship.

The rationalistic critics have generally assigned a late date to the book, and supposed it to be the work of some unknown writer in the times of the Seleucidæ and the Ptolemies. All the arguments, however, for such a late date are weak and futile. The language used in chap. i, 1 and x, 2 naturally indicates that the reign of Ahasuerus was past, but it would be perfectly natural and appropriate for a writer living under the reign of his immediate successor. The intimate acquaintance with the Persian court and customs, and the vivid descriptions of various events, indicate that the author was a contemporary of Mordecai and Esther, and an eye-witness of many things which he narrates. These facts, in the absence of any thing of weight to the contrary, seem sufficient to fix the date somewhere in the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus, the son and successor of Xerxes the Great.

The authorship has been attributed variously: to the men of the Great Synagogue; to Joiachim the high priest; to Ezra the scribe; and to Mordecai. The question cannot be decided with certainty, but it is very probable that Mordecai either wrote the book himself, or caused it to be written by one of his contemporaries. With the death of Xerxes, or soon after, he doubtless lost his high position in the Persian court, and then it would be a solace and pleasure for him to write, or procure the writing, of his history as presented in the Book of Esther.

### Sacred Character and Worth.

While it is admitted that this book exhibits the spirit of Jewish vindictiveness toward enemies, and is noticeably secular or untheocratic as compared with the other historical books of the Old Testament, we must not fail to see that it has also a sacred character and worth. The very reticence on religion and Judaism, which has been thought so strange, may have its lessons. The caution of the writer has its perfect parallel in Mordecai and Esther. They, too, are very reticent about their race and religion. They even concert together to conceal their Jewish affinities. Here, then, we doubtless have a truthful portraiture of many of the Jews of the dispersion. They lost, by

their long exile and familiarity with other races and customs, their ancient national spirit; and while they remained true to the great principles of their religion, they were usually very cautious about making them known. Whatever may be thought of this kind of caution, it is evidence of the writer's historical fidelity. When the sheep are scattered in the wilderness, and often hear the stranger's voice, and know the wolf is near, they may do well to keep silent.

We must not overlook the fact that the book bears evidence of the faith and piety of Mordecai and Esther. Mordecai will not compromise his religion by bowing down to a mortal, (note on chap. iii, 2, 3,) and when his nation is threatened with destruction he is confident that Divine help will come from some place. Chap. iv, 14. And before Esther will hazard her life, and seek the salvation of her people before the king, she and her maidens, and all the Jews of Shushan, observe a solemn fast for three days. Chap. iv, 16.

The lessons of Divine Providence, as exhibited in this book, are striking. Though the name of God is not expressed, his presence and power are every-where felt. We trace the Divine hand in all the events that conspire to elevate Esther and Mordecai to positions of power just at the moment when there seemed no earthly power to help the Jews. The follies of Xerxes and the wickedness of Haman were not caused or sanctioned by God, but they were divinely overruled. The divorce of Vashti prepared the way for Esther. The favour which the latter received, both at the hand of Hegai and of the king, is to be ascribed to Him who "brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs." Dan. i, 9. The sleepless night which led to the discovery of Mordecai's unrewarded services was no less ordered of God than the dreams of Pharaoh, (Gen. xli, 25,) or of Nebuchadnezzar. Dan. ii, 28. The sudden fall of Haman, and his execution upon the very post he had erected for Mordecai; the promotion of the Jew, and the edict that nullified the device of Haman and saved the Jews from helpless massacre—all showed most strikingly that "promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another." Psa. lxxv, 6, 7.

The Book of Esther is an invaluable counterpart to the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. These latter show how God was careful to open the way for the restoration of Israel to the fatherland. They show the zeal and love that led so many of the exiles to return and build again the temple and the holy city. But this book shows the character of many who were not disposed to return from exile. No doubt there was in them a want of love for Zion. Multitudes preferred the lands of exile to the land of Israel. And the result of this may be discerned

in the tone and spirit of our book. Its secular style, as compared with Ezra and Nehemiah, may have for us profound suggestions. "There is inspiration in silence," says Wordsworth. "If we loiter in Persia when we ought to return to Jerusalem; if we love the courts of earthly princes more than the Church of the living God; if we prefer earth to heaven, and time to eternity, then our moral and religious tone will infallibly decline." But while the reformed and restored Church at Jerusalem receives great blessings, and shows a purer faith, the Church of the dispersion, the twelve tribes still scattered abroad, though they do not "prefer Jerusalem above their chief joy," are yet not without Divine oversight and care.

### Contents.

The Royal Feast at Shushan.....	i, 1-9	Haman's Indignation at Mordecai..	v, 9-14
Divorce of Vashti .....	i, 10-22	Mordecai Honoured.....	vi, 1-14
Esther made Queen.....	ii, 1-18	Haman Convicted and Hanged.....	vii, 1-10
Mordecai Exposes a Court Conspiracy	ii, 19-23	Mordecai's Promotion and the Edict	
Haman's Promotion and the Edict		in behalf of the Jews.....	viii, 1-17
against the Jews.....	iii, 1-15	The Two Days of Vengeance .....	ix, 1-19
The Mourning and Fasting .....	iv, 1-17	The Feast of Purim.....	ix, 20-32
Esther's Reception and the Banquet	v, 1-8	Mordecai's Greatness.....	x, 1-3

# THE BOOK OF ESTHER.

## CHAPTER I.

**N**OW it came to pass in the days of <sup>a</sup>Ahasuerus, (this *is* Ahasuerus which reigned <sup>b</sup>from India even unto Ethiopia, <sup>c</sup>over a hundred and seven

<sup>a</sup> Ezra 4 6; Dan. 9. 1.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 8. 9.  
<sup>c</sup> Dan. 6. 1.

## CHAPTER I.

THE ROYAL FEAST AT SHUSHAN, 1-9.

1. **This is Ahasuerus**—Our author is careful to distinguish this Ahasuerus from other monarchs of the same name who are mentioned in the Hebrew books. We read of a Median Ahasuerus in Daniel ix, 1, and in Ezra iv, 6 Cambyses, son of Cyrus, bears the same name. Neither of these, however, **reigned from India even unto Ethiopia**, that is, from the Indus to the Upper Nile. But as three different Persian kings reigned over this extent of country, we conclude that the name *Ahasuerus* was not, as some have imagined, a title common to all the kings of Persia. Only one of these three wide-ruling sovereigns was known as **Ahasuerus**, and him we identify with Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius Hystaspis. For the argument by which this opinion is supported, see Introduction. The word *India* (הִינדוּ, *Hoddu*) occurs in the Bible only here and in chap. viii, 9, and designates the country bordering on the river Indus, but not including, as now, the whole peninsula of Hindostan. **Ethiopia**—Hebrew, *Cush*; the name of an indefinite extent of country bordering on the south of Egypt, and watered by the branches of the Upper Nile. Herodotus mentions (vii, 9) both Indians and Ethiopians as subjects of Xerxes. **A hundred and seven and twenty provinces**—These provinces were subdivisions of

and twenty provinces,) **2 That** in those days, when the king Ahasuerus <sup>d</sup>sat on the throne of his kingdom, which *was* in <sup>e</sup>Shushan the palace, **3 In** the third year of his reign, he <sup>f</sup>made a feast unto

<sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 1. 46.—<sup>e</sup> Neh. 1. 1.—<sup>f</sup> Gen. 40, 20; chap. 2. 18; Mark 6. 21.

the Persian empire, according to races or tribes inhabiting different localities. They are not to be confounded with *satrapies*, for one satrapy might include many provinces. Darius Hystaspis divided the empire into twenty satrapies, (*Herod.*, iii, 89,) each of which comprised a number of nations or tribes. The Jewish community at Jerusalem formed a *province*, (Ezra ii, 1; Neh. i, 3,) but it was under a governor of the region west of the Euphrates. See note on Ezra v, 3. Darius the Mede set over his Babylonian kingdom one hundred and twenty "princes," (Dan. vi, 2,) but these were not the same as the Persian satraps, who resembled rather the "three presidents of whom Daniel was first," while the "princes" were probably more like the rulers of provinces in the later Persian empire.

2. **Sat on the throne of his kingdom**—That is, was quietly and firmly settled in his dominions; an oriental mode of representing an absolute monarch in possession of royal authority and power. The Asiatic kings are thus represented on the monuments, and Xerxes is said to have watched the battles of Thermopylæ and Salamis while seated on a throne. **Shushan the palace**—See note on Neh. i, 1.

3. **The third year of his reign**—This coincides with the time just after his reduction of Egypt, when, according to Herodotus, (vii, 7, 8,) Xerxes convoked a great assembly of the principal Persians, the chiefs of the empire,

all his princes and his servants; the power of Persia and Media, the nobles and princes of the provinces, *being* before him: **4** When <sup>he</sup> showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the

g Isa. 39, 2; Ezek. 28, 5; Dan. 4, 30.

to deliberate on his expedition against Greece. This coincidence is no light argument for identifying Ahasuerus with Xerxes. **Made a feast**—Among the Persians and other oriental nations it was a custom for kings and generals to give a grand banquet after a victory, or upon a great state occasion. So in the Book of Judith, (i, 16,) Nebuchadnezzar returns from a great victory and feasts his army one hundred and twenty days. So Cyrus feasted the Persians when he wished to unite them in revolt from the power of Media. (*Herod.*, i, 126.) Belshazzar feasted a thousand nobles, (Dan. v, 1,) and, according to Quintus Curtius, ten thousand men were present at one of Alexander's festivals. **All his princes and his servants**—That is, all the rulers of the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, and other officers, civil and military, who held positions of honour and power under the king. These are further defined as **the power of Persia and Media**, the *élite* of the empire, as represented in **the nobles and princes of the provinces**. The *nobles* were of a rank superior to the princes, or rulers of provinces. They were, next to the king, the great magnates of the empire, the first men of the nation. The word rendered *nobles*, (פרתמים) is of Persian origin, and signifies *first*. No ordinary occasion was this great banquet of Ahasuerus, when **before him** were assembled these representatives of his power. The repeated mention in this chapter (comp. verses 14, 18, 19) of Persia and Media, always naming Persia first, shows that at the time of this feast Persia had supremacy over the Medes. Compare the opposite usage in Dan. v, 28; vi, 8; xii, 15; viii, 20; when the Median power was yet in the ascendancy.

**4. When he showed**—Literally, *in his showing*; that is, while he showed or descanted on his wealth and power.

honour of his excellent majesty many days, *even* a hundred and fourscore days. **5** And when these days were expired, the king made a feast unto all the people that were <sup>1</sup>present in Shushan the

1 Hebrew, *found*.

**The riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty** are not to be understood of the wealth and magnificence displayed at the royal banquet, but rather the extent and vast resources of his empire, as exhibited by the number and dignity of his guests. If his object in assembling these great officers of his realm was to deliberate on the invasion of Greece, we see a reason for this *showing* of his vast wealth and power. He would thus convince his princes of his abundant ability to conquer Greece.

**A hundred and fourscore days**—We are not to understand, as some have done, that the royal feast continued all these six months. The great banquet was given, as the next verse shows, after these days had expired. But many a feast of less note might have been held during the one hundred and eighty days. Ctesias relates that the king of Persia furnished provisions daily for twenty-five thousand men. We need not suppose, however, that all the princes of the empire were absent from their homes and entertained for six months at Shushan; but rather, as Rawlinson suggests, "we may conclude that the time was extended in order to allow of the different persons making their appearance at the court successively." Xerxes is said to have been four years in mustering his forces and making preparations for his expedition against the Greeks, (*Herod.*, vii, 20,) and he might well have spent the half of one year in consulting with his nobles, forming plans, and estimating the character and extent of his resources.

**5. When these days were expired**—That is, at the end of the one hundred and eighty days. **Unto all the people that were present in Shushan**—Literally, as the margin, all that were *found* at Shushan. Probably not all the princes of the empire

palace, both unto great and small, seven days, in the court of the garden of the king's palace; **6** *Where were white, green, and <sup>2</sup>blue hangings, fastened with*

**2 Or, violet.**—<sup>h</sup> See chap. 7. 8; Ezek. 23. 41; Amos 2. 8; 6. 4.

were to be found at the palace at the same time, but such of them as were found there at the time indicated were honoured with this magnificent banquet. But this feast was not for the princes only, but for *all the people*, irrespective of rank, for the writer is careful to say that it was made **both unto great and small**. Some have supposed two banquets, one lasting one hundred and eighty, and the other **seven days**, the former for the princes and nobles, the latter for the inhabitants of Shushan. But this supposition is unnecessary. No doubt the one hundred and eighty days, as remarked above, were enlivened by many a feast, at which only nobles and princes were present; but this grand feast, which lasted seven days, was an occasion of general revelry, in which princes and people alike participated. **The court of the garden of the king's palace**—Oriental palaces had a park or garden connected with them, adorned with trees and fountains. The *court* of such garden was either the great hall that opened immediately upon it or the garden itself. Loftus identifies this court with the great colonnade, of which we have given a cut on page 436. He remarks: "It stands on an elevation in the centre of the mound, the remainder of which we may well imagine to have been occupied, after the Persian fashion, with a garden and fountains. Thus the colonnade would represent the 'court of the garden of the king's palace,' with its 'pillars of marble.' I am even inclined to believe that the expression 'Shushan the palace,' applies especially to this portion of the existing ruins in contradistinction to the citadel and the city of Shushan." But according to Fergusson, "the feast took place, not in the interior of any hall, but out of doors, in tents erected in one of the courts of the palace, such as we may easily fancy

cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and pillars of marble: <sup>2</sup> the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement <sup>3</sup> of red, and blue, and white, and

**3 Or, of porphyry, and marble, and alabaster, and stone of blue colour.**

existed in front of either the eastern or western porches of the great central building." Comp. note on chap. v. 1.

**6. White, green, and blue**—White and blue, or violet, seem to have been royal colours in Persia. Comp. chap. viii. 15. The great hall of marble pillars was adorned with hangings of various colours and materials, which were **fastened** in festoon-like form to the pillars, and served probably both for ornament and awning. It is difficult to identify precisely the various colours and substances mentioned in this verse. Keil renders the whole verse thus: *White stuff, variegated and purple hangings, fastened with cords of byssus and purple to silver rings and marble pillars; couches of gold and silver upon a pavement of malachite and marble, mother-of-pearl and tortoise-shell.* "The description," he remarks, "consists of mere allusions to, or exclamations at, the splendour of the preparations. In the first half of the verse the hangings of the room, in the second the couches for the guests, are noticed." These couches (which were placed upon the tessellated pavement of the court, and on which the guests reclined at the banquet) were probably not of solid **gold and silver**, but either "covered with cloth woven of gold and silver thread," (Keil,) or else mounted and beautifully set with plates of these precious metals. Herodotus (ix, 80–82) makes mention of the vast quantities of gold and silver vessels of various kinds, together with gold and silver couches and tables, and various coloured *awnings*, (*παραπετάσματα*;) which Xerxes carried with him on his expedition to Greece. Strabo (xv, 3, 19) says of the Persians, "their couches, drinking cups, and other articles are so brilliantly ornamented that they gleam with gold and silver." Other ancient writers also mention the immense wealth of Persia.

black marble. 7 And they gave *them* drink in vessels of gold, (the vessels being diverse one from another,) and 'royal wine in abundance, 'according to the state of the king. 8 And the drinking *was* according to the law; none did compel: for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house, that they should do according to every man's pleasure. ¶ Also Vashti the queen

4 Hebrew, *wine of the kingdom*.—5 Hebrew, *according to the hand of the king*.

7. **The vessels being diverse**—Literally, *vessels from vessels differing*, that is, in size, shape, colour, and material. **Royal wine**—Such as only kings were wont to use. According to Strabo the special drink of the Persian kings was Chalybonian wine from Syria. **According to the state of the king**—According to all the other exhibitions of his royal bounty. Compare 1 Kings x, 13.

8. **The drinking... according to the law**—That is, according to a specific decree of the king, which decree was, that there should be no compulsion in the matter of drinking at this feast. This is seen further on in the words, **for so the king had appointed to all the officers of his house**. He gave orders that his guests should be allowed to drink much or little, or not at all, **according to every man's pleasure**. "He respected their national habits," says Wordsworth, "and did not forget that some of the mountaineer Persian tribes, which retained the simplicity and strictness of their ancient customs, were famous for their temperance." (XENOPHON, *Cyrop.*, i, 2, 16; AMMIAN. MARCELLINUS, xxiii, 6.) Large quantities of wine were usually drank at Persian festivals, and it is supposed that the custom of pledging guests commonly prevailed to such an extent as to compel many to drink against their will.

9. **Vashti the queen**—Rawlinson is inclined to identify this queen with Amestris, and supposes that her divorce and disgrace, recorded in this chapter, may have been only temporary, and that she was restored to her former dignity again in the latter part of Xerxes' reign. More probably,

made a feast for the women *in* the royal house which *belonged to* king Ahasuerus.

10 On the seventh day, when <sup>1</sup>the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, \* Harbona, Bigtha, and Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, the seven \* chamberlains that served in the presence of Ahasuerus the king, 11 To bring Vashti the queen before the king with the crown royal,

2 Samuel 13. 28.—3 Chapter 7. 9.  
6 Or, *eunuchs*.

however, she was not the queen-consort, but a favourite concubine, whom the king delighted to honour. As he lavished royal honours on a favourite officer, (chap. vi, 11,) so might he allow a favourite of his harem to make and preside at a feast for the women in the royal house. The Greek writers state that it was a custom of the Persians to introduce their wives and concubines at great feasts, but, when drunken and riotous, they sent their legitimate wives away, and called in the concubines and singing girls.

#### DIVORCE OF VASHTI, 10-22.

10. **On the seventh day**—The last day of the feast. Compare verse 5. **Merry with wine**—"The Persians are much addicted to wine," writes Herodotus, (i, 133.) "They are accustomed to debate the most important affairs when intoxicated, but they reconsider such deliberation the next day, when they are sober, and if they approve it when sober also, they adopt it; if not, they reject it, and whatever they have first resolved on when sober, they reconsider when intoxicated." This feast of Ahasuerus seems to have increased in riot and drunken revelry as the days passed. **The seven chamberlains**—Rather, *eunuchs*, who had principal charge of the royal harem. Their number corresponded to that of the princes, verse 14.

11. **The crown royal**—"The crown royal, or ordinary headdress of a Persian king, was a stiff cap, probably of felt or cloth, ornamented with a blue and white band or ribbon—which was the diadem proper. The character of the queen's crown is unknown."—Rawlinson. This mention of the crown

to show the people and the princes her beauty: for she *was* fair to look on. **12** But the queen Vashti refused to come at the king's commandment <sup>a</sup> by his chamberlains: therefore was the king very wrath, and his anger burned in him. **13** Then the king said to the wise men, <sup>m</sup> which knew the times, (for so *was* the king's manner toward all that knew law and judgment: **14** And the next unto him *was* Carshena, She-thar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the <sup>n</sup> seven princes of Persia and Media, <sup>o</sup> which saw the king's face, and which sat the first in the kingdom,) **15** <sup>p</sup> What shall we do unto the queen Vashti according to law, because she hath not performed the commandment of the king Ahasuerus

by the chamberlains? **16** And Memucan answered before the king and the princes, Vashti the queen hath not done wrong to the king only, but also to all the princes, and to all the people that *are* in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus. **17** For *this* deed of the queen shall come abroad unto all women, so that they shall <sup>q</sup> despise their husbands in their eyes, when it shall be reported, The king Ahasuerus commanded Vashti the queen to be brought in before him, but she came not. **18** *Like-wise* shall the ladies of Persia and Media say this day unto all the king's princes, which have heard of the deed of the queen. Thus *shall there arise* too much contempt and wrath. **19** <sup>10</sup> If it please the king, let there go a royal command-

<sup>7</sup> Heb. *good of countenance*.—<sup>8</sup> Heb. *which was by the hand of his eunuchs*.—<sup>1</sup> Jer. 10. 7; Dan. 2. 12; Matt. 2. 1.—<sup>m</sup> 1 Chron. 12. 32.

<sup>n</sup> Ezra 7. 14.—<sup>o</sup> 2 Kings 25. 19.—<sup>9</sup> Hebrew, *What to do*.—<sup>p</sup> 2 Sam. 6. 16; Eph. 5. 33.—<sup>10</sup> Hebrew, *If it be good with the king*.

*royal* does not prove Vashti to have been the principal and legitimate wife of Ahasuerus, for, as shown above, (see note on verse 9,) a favourite concubine may have been thus honoured.

**12. Vashti refused to come**—Assuming the dignity and boldness of a queen, she refused to be treated as an ordinary concubine, and to suffer her person to be immodestly exposed to the promiscuous crowd of half drunken revellers. "The summons," remarks Tyrwhitt, "probably found her with a crowd of female guests before her. She might have been loth at another time to obey; but while they looked on, it was a severer trial to be required to abdicate her dignity, and, confessing her royal state *his* bounty, to cast, as it were, her crown before his footstool." Only such a king as Xerxes would have made such a demand upon a favourite concubine, but it is perfectly in keeping with his character.

**13. The wise men, which knew the times**—Men versed in the laws and customs of their age and of former times, and, therefore, capable of giving proper counsel on any matters of law or precedent. **So was the king's manner**—The regard of the Persians and Medes for their laws is proverbial, and the kings were always careful to consult the wise men, who **knew law and judgment**, before they proceeded

to enact or execute any great or unusual measure.

**14. The seven princes**—These seven, whose names are here given, are among the *wise men* whom he consulted. They were his most intimate counsellors, and the very highest nobles of the empire. See the note on Ezra vii, 14. In the name **Admatha** we may, perhaps, recognise *Artabanus*, the uncle of Xerxes, (*Herod.*, vii, 10,) and in **Marsena**, his famous general *Mardonius*.

**15. What shall we do... according to law**—They are sometimes great sticklers for law who often, in their personal conduct, seem to know no law.

**16. Memucan answered**—In this address of Memucan we have a genuine specimen of an ingenious Persian courtier. We cannot but admire the skill by which he merges the king's cause into that of **all the princes** and husbands of the empire.

**18. Ladies—Princesses**; those who were with their husbands at the court of Ahasuerus, or at Shushan, where they would at once (**this day**) hear of Vashti's deed, that is, both her act and words, and be emboldened to say to their lords what Vashti had said to the king. **Contempt and wrath**—Contempt on the part of wives for their husbands, and consequent wrath or anger (compare verse 12) on the part

ment <sup>11</sup>from him, and let it be written among the laws of the Persians and the Medes, <sup>12</sup>that it be not altered, That Vashti come no more before king Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal estate <sup>13</sup>unto another that is better than she. **20** And when the king's decree, which he shall make, shall be published throughout all his empire, (for it is great,) all the wives

<sup>11</sup> Heb. *from before him*.—<sup>12</sup> Heb. *that it pass not away*, chap. 8. 8; Dan. 6. 8, 12, 15.—<sup>13</sup> Heb. *unto her companion*.—*q* Eph. 5. 33; Col. 3. 18; 1 Pet. 3. 1.

of the affronted husbands. This verse should be rendered thus: *And this day will the princesses of Persia and Media, who have heard of the word of the queen, say (like words) to all the princes of the king, and (there will be) enough contempt and wrath.*

**19. That it be not altered**—Literally, *and it shall not pass away*; that is, it shall remain as a precedent, and be a permanent law for such matters in the empire. On the proverbial inviolability of the laws of the Medes and Persians, compare the marginal references. It originated, probably, in a desire to enhance in the national mind the sacredness of law, and also to forestall capricious and hasty changes in administration. But it was a defective and pernicious principle, making no provision against the capricious enactment of rash and harmful laws, and then allowing no repeal nor modification of them. Practically, however, it was often evaded, and the monarch found some way to make it lawful to do as he pleased. **Her royal estate**—The queenly privileges and honours with which the king had been pleased to distinguish her. **Unto another**—Hewbrew, *her female companion*. This expression indicates that she herself was but a concubine, for the monarch's legitimate marriage with one who was to be principal wife, and who, according to Persian law, (*Herod.*, iii, 84,) could be taken only from one of the seven princely families of the empire, would hardly be spoken of in this way.

**20. Both to great and small**—The royal example and decree would thus furnish custom and law for all ranks and classes of people in the empire.

shall <sup>2</sup>give to their husbands honour, both to great and small. **21** And the saying <sup>14</sup>pleased the king and the princes; and the king did according to the word of Memucan: **22** For he sent letters into all the king's provinces, <sup>1</sup>into every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language, that every man should <sup>2</sup>bear rule in his own house, and <sup>15</sup>that *it*

<sup>14</sup> Heb. *was good in the eyes of the king*.—*r* Chap. 8. 9.—*s* Eph. 5. 22, 23, 24; 1 Tim. 2. 12.—<sup>15</sup> Heb. *that one should publish it according to the language of his people*.

**22. He sent letters**—Herodotus (viii, 98) thus describes the Persian system of letter carrying: "There is nothing mortal that proceeds faster than these messengers. They detail and arrange so many men and horses as there are days' journeys, a horse and a man being appointed for each day's journey, and neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor night prevents them from finishing their allotted race as soon as possible. The first racer delivers his message to the second, and the second to the third, and so on." **Every province according to the writing thereof**—That is, according to its written alphabetical character in use in each province. **To every people after their language**—According to their vernacular dialect. The same alphabetical character might be used, as is still common, for several different languages. The bilingual and trilingual inscriptions of Persia and other oriental lands are standing evidences and illustrations of the ancient practice of writing public documents in various characters and languages. **That every man should bear rule in his own house**—No doubt the king's letters contained much more than this, but we have here only the general purport of the royal decree. Rawlinson remarks that "the undue influence of women in domestic, and even in public, matters is a feature of the ancient Persian monarchy. Herodotus (vii, 8) tells us that Atossa completely ruled Darius. Xerxes himself was, in his later years, shamefully subject to Amestris. (*Ibid.*, ix, 111.) The example of the court would naturally infect the people. The decree would, therefore, seem to have been not so

should be published according to the language of every people.

## CHAPTER II.

**A**FTER these things, when the wrath of king Ahasuerus was appeased, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and <sup>a</sup> what was decreed against her. **2** Then said the king's servants

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 1. 19, 20.—<sup>b</sup> Gen. 12, 14; 1 Kings 1. 2

such an idle and superfluous act as an ineffectual protest against a real and growing evil." (*Com. in loco.*) If the decree itself be considered unnecessary and absurd, let it be remembered that this was not the only absurd thing which Xerxes did. **And that it should be published**—Our version is here faulty. The latter part of the verse should be rendered, *That every man rule in his own house, and speak according to the language of his own people.* That is, not only should every man be lord in his family, but he should require his own native language to be used by his wife and children. Multitudes throughout the empire married foreign wives, and the use of different languages in the same household may have often led to other troubles besides those mentioned in Neh. xiii, 24. Foreign wives were therefore required to learn the language of their husbands, in order that the husband's pre-eminence and authority in his own house might be the better maintained. Some critics have sought to emend the text, so as to make it read, *speak all that suited him*; but this reading is purely conjectural, sustained by no parallel, and yields but a trivial thought.

## CHAPTER II.

ESTHER MADE QUEEN, 1-18.

**1. After these things**—How long after the divorce of Vashti is uncertain. It may have been only a few months, or it may have been a year or more after. It is no doubt to be dated before Xerxes' departure for Greece, so that the gathering of the virgins to Shushan took place while he was absent from his capital. See note on verse 16. **He remembered Vashti**

that ministered unto him, <sup>b</sup> Let there be fair young virgins sought for the king.

**3** And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather together all the fair young virgins unto Shushan the palace, to the house of the women, <sup>1</sup> unto the custody of <sup>2</sup> Hege the king's chamberlain, keeper of the women; and let their

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *unto the hand.*—<sup>2</sup> Or, *Hegai*, verse 8.

—And along with the remembrance came a desire to have her restored to favour again, and probably, also, a feeling that she had been too severely dealt with.

**2. Then said the king's servants**

—The king probably made known his thoughts and feelings to his servants, and sought their counsel in the matter. These *servants* were his court officials, officers of the palace, and most of them probably eunuchs. **Fair young virgins sought**—These officers were anxious to maintain the inviolability of the decree against Vashti, and to prevent the restoration of the deposed favourite, lest the lives of those princes who had advised her repudiation should be endangered.

**3. In all the provinces...that**

**they may gather**—Had the king been wanting a legitimate wife, no Persian officer would have proposed a measure like this. The laws of Persia and Media required the king to select his wives from the seven noble families. (*Herod.*, iii, 84.) Hence this gathering of virgins from all the provinces, irrespective of country or race, shows that the search was for a favourite concubine, not a legitimate queen. **The house of the women**—The harem, or apartment of the royal palace in which were kept the king's wives and concubines, numbering often several hundred. See note on 1 Kings xi, 3. The necessary degradation of woman under such usages is a matter of note, and the parents of beautiful maidens evidently had no power to withhold their daughters if demanded for the royal harem. **Hege...keeper of the women**—He seems to have been chief eunuch, and principal overseer of the harem. Rawlinson thinks he may have been the

things for purification be given *them*:  
**4** And let the maiden which pleaseth the king be queen instead of Vashti. And the thing pleased the king; and he did so. **5** Now in Shushan the palace there was a certain Jew, whose name was Mordecai, the son of Jair, the son

c 2 Kings 24. 14, 15; 2 Chronicles 36. 10, 20;  
 Jeremiah 24. 1.

keeper of the *virgins* only, since Shashgaz was keeper of the concubines. Verse 14. **Things for purification**—Such as are mentioned in verse 12.

**5. Mordecai**—Some scholars connect this name with Merodach, the Babylonian idol, (Jer. 1, 2,) but the etymology is uncertain. He may, perhaps, be identified with Natacas, or Matocas, whom Ctesias mentions as one of Xerxes' most favourite and powerful eunuchs, and whom he sent after his return from Greece, to plunder and destroy a temple of Apollo. That Mordecai was a eunuch appears probable from the position he held in the Persian court, his access to the house of the women, and his adoption and care of the youthful Esther. **Jair... Shimei... Kish**—These are obviously the immediate ancestors of Mordecai, since, according to the next verse, the great-grandfather, Kish, had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. Hence there is no sufficient reason to identify this Shimei with the son of Gera, mentioned in 2 Sam. xvi, 5, or this Kish with the father of Saul. 1 Sam. ix, 1. These four generations would naturally cover about the period of time that intervened between the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxiv, 8) and the middle of Xerxes' reign.

**6. Who had been carried away**—The relative *who*, here, must refer to *Kish*, not to Mordecai; for it is scarcely possible that a captive of Nebuchadnezzar should have been an officer of the Persian court in the time of Xerxes. Daniel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and continued till the reign of Cyrus, (Dan. i, 1, 21,) and the fact is mentioned as worthy of special remark. Had Mordecai been his contemporary, and yet have lived on to the time of Xerxes, the fact would no doubt have received special notice.

of Shimei, the son of Kish, a Benjamite;  
**6** Who had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captivity which had been carried away with Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. **7** And he brought up Hadassah, that is, Esther,

3 Or, *Jehoiachin*, 2 Kings 24. 6.—4 Hebrew, *nourished*, Eph. 6. 4.

But the attempt of Tyrwhitt (*Esther and Ahasuerus*) to show that a great-grandson of a captive taken by Nebuchadnezzar could not have been contemporary with Xerxes, is every way futile. Kish may have been a mere child when taken captive, and Shimei and Jair may not have been the first born. Arguments based on parallel lines of descent are often misleading, for, of the great-grandchildren of two contemporaries, some may be mere infants when others are of mature age. **Jeconiah**—Another form of the name *Jehoiachin*. Comp. 2 Kings xxiv, 12, with Jer. xxiv, 1.

**7. Hadassah, that is, Esther**—Tyrwhitt regards *Hadassah* as the court name, by which she was known among the Persians, and *Esther* as her Jewish maiden name, by which she was known to her own people. But to this it may be fairly replied that she would be more likely to be known to her own people as well as to the Persians by her royal name; and most interpreters have naturally understood from the expression, *he brought up Hadassah, which is Esther*, that *Hadassah* was her early maiden name, and that she took the name of *Esther* when she became queen. Moreover *Hadassah* is of Semitic origin, and signifies *myrtle*; while *Esther* is the Persian word for *star*, (Greek, ἀστήρ.) The **fair and beautiful** maiden was known as *myrtle*; the brilliant and fascinating queen was called *star*. The name *Hadassah* is, indeed, substantially identical with *Atossa*, mentioned by the Greek writers as the wife of Darius Hystaspes, and daughter of Cyrus, but the identity in name is insufficient to identify the Jewish virgin with one who is so clearly represented by Herodotus as both daughter of Cyrus and widow of Cambyses. (*Herodotus*, iii, 88.) **Hjs**

his uncle's daughter: for she had neither father nor mother, and the maid was fair and beautiful; whom Mordecai, when her father and mother were dead, took for his own daughter. 8 So it came to pass, when the king's commandment and his decree was heard, and when many maidens were gathered together unto Shushan the palace, to the custody of Hegai, that Esther was brought also unto the king's house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women. 9 And the maiden pleased him, and she obtained kindness of him; and he speedily gave her her things for purification, with such things as belonged to her, and seven maidens, which were meet to be given her, out of the king's house: and he preferred her and her maids unto the best place of the house of the women. 10 Esther had not showed her people nor her kindred: for Mordecai had charged her that she

*d* Verse 15.—5 Heb. fair of form and good of countenance.—*e* Verse 3.—*f* Verses 3, 12.

**uncle's daughter**—This uncle's name was Abihail. Verse 15. Mordecai and Esther were cousins, but Mordecai was evidently much the older.

**9. Such things as belonged to her**—Hebrew, *her portions*, that is, proper allowances of food. **Seven maidens . . . meet to be given her**—Each of the virgins probably had seven maids appointed to attend her, but Esther's seven were selected with special care,

(meet, ראיות, *looked up, searched out*, from ראה, *to see, to look after*;) and Hegai's further partiality for her was shown in his preferring, or changing, her and her maids to the choice apartments of the harem.

**10. Not showed her people**—She was directed to this course by her cousin and foster-father as a matter of politic prudence, lest her attachment to her race and religion should prejudice her interests with the officers of the harem.

**11. Mordecai . . . before the court of the women's house**—He was one of the royal porters, (comp. verse 19,) and from his ready access to the court of the harem, it is very naturally supposed that he was a eunuch.

**12. According to the manner of the women**—Rather, the law of the

should not show it. 11 And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what should become of her. 12 Now when every maid's turn was come to go in to king Ahasuerus, after that she had been twelve months, according to the manner of the women, (for so were the days of their purifications accomplished, *to wit*, six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with sweet odours, and with other things for the purifying of the women,) 13 Then thus came every maiden unto the king; whatsoever she desired was given her to go with her out of the house of the women unto the king's house. 14 In the evening she went, and on the morrow she returned into the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's chamberlain, which kept the concubines: she came in unto the king no more, except the king de-

6 Heb. her portions.—7 Heb. he changed her.—*g* Ver. 20.—8 Heb. to know the peace.

women; that is, the order or requirement indicated in verse 2 and explained in the sequel of this verse, according to which these women were to go through a twelvemonths' purification. **Myrrh . . . sweet odours**—The design was to cleanse, soften, and beautify to the utmost possible degree.

**13. Whatsoever she desired**—In the way of jewels, ornaments, or dress. "No doubt," says Rawlinson, "the virgins generally took the opportunity—one that would occur but once in their lives—to load themselves with precious ornaments of various kinds, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, anklets, and the like."

**14. The second house of the women**—An apartment or division of the harem of secondary importance or rank—the place of the concubines. But the word **second** may be taken in the sense of *again*, and the passage rendered, *she returned to the house of the women again*, or, *a second time*. So Bertheau and Keil. When, however, these women returned again to the harem, they were assigned to a different department from that of the virgins. This is evident from their being placed in **custody of Shaashgaz**, the keeper of the concubines, not of Hegai, who had charge of the virgins.

lighted in her, and that she were <sup>b</sup> called by name. **15** Now when the turn of Esther, <sup>c</sup> the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her for his daughter, was come to go in unto the king, she required nothing but what Hegai the king's chamberlain, the keeper of the women, appointed. And Esther obtained favour in the sight of all them that looked upon her. **16** So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. **17** And the king loved

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 43. 1; 45. 4.—<sup>i</sup> Ver. 7.—<sup>9</sup> Or, kindness.  
<sup>10</sup> Heb. *before him*.

**15. She required nothing**—She made no effort to adorn her person with jewelry or dress to please her own fancy, but left that matter entirely to Hegai, who would be likely to know best what would please the king.

**16. The tenth month... Tebeth**—Corresponding nearly with our January. **The seventh year of his reign**—Vashti was divorced in the third year of his reign, so that four years or more elapsed before another queen was crowned in her stead. Xerxes' preparations for his Grecian war, and his absence from his capital during that campaign, well accounts for this long interval. Herodotus says (vii, 20) that he was four full years preparing for his Grecian war, but this may easily be a mistake, for the Greek historian's figures are not always to be depended upon. It may have been a year or more after Vashti's divorce before the king's love for her returned, and then the order was given for collecting the fair young virgins at Shushan, but before it could be executed Xerxes was off for Greece. Meanwhile the order for assembling the virgins was carried out by the eunuchs, so that when the king returned again to Shushan he found his harem supplied with many virgins, and soon after chose Esther as his queen.

**17. Set the royal crown upon her head**—To show his delight in honouring her, and to distinguish her as his favourite mistress. Compare chap. i, 9, 11, notes.

**18. Esther's feast**—A banquet to her honour; to celebrate her election

Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and <sup>a</sup> favour <sup>10</sup> in his sight more than all the virgins; so that ~~he~~ set the royal crown upon her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti. **18** Then the king <sup>b</sup> made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, *even* Esther's feast; and he made a <sup>c</sup> release to the provinces, and gave gifts according to the state of the king.

**19** And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, then Mordecai sat <sup>d</sup> in the king's gate. **20** <sup>e</sup> Esther had not *yet* showed her kindred nor

<sup>2</sup> Chap. 1. 3.—<sup>11</sup> Heb. *rest*.—<sup>i</sup> Ver. 21; chap. 3. 2.—<sup>m</sup> Verse 10.

to Vashti's place. **Made a release to the provinces**—Usually understood as a release from tribute. Septuagint has ἀφεσιν; Vulgate, *requiem*. The Hebrew word הַנְּחָה, which occurs nowhere else, comes from a root which means *to rest*, and may, therefore, properly denote a respite from taxation. The Persian kings were wont to remit the arrears of tribute due at the time of their accession, (*Herod.*, iii, 67; vi, 59,) and Xerxes may have thought it wise to grant such a release just after the disastrous Grecian war. **According to the state of the king**—The feast, the release, and the gifts, were all in keeping with true kingly munificence.

MORDECAI EXPOSES A COURT CONSPIRACY, 19-23.

**19. When the virgins... the second time**—Rather, *at the gathering together of virgins a second time*. Hence it appears there was a second collection of virgins at Shushan, made some years after the previous one, and with the design, no doubt, of enriching the royal harem with new beauties. After his unsuccessful war with Greece, the king abandoned all plans of conquest, and gave himself over to the pleasures of his harem. Accordingly, such a second gathering of virgins would be readily devised to gratify both his vanity and lust. **Mordecai sat in the king's gate**—He was one of the royal porters who guarded the doors of the great palace at Shushan.

**20. Esther had not... showed**—This verse should be regarded as a pa-

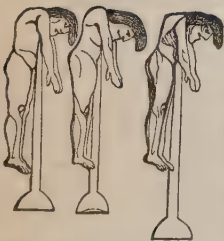
her people, as Mordecai had charged her: for Esther did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him. **21** In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, two of the king's chamberlains, <sup>12</sup> Bigthan and Teresh, of those which kept <sup>13</sup> the door, were wroth, and sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. **22** And the thing was known to Mordecai, "who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther certified the king *thereof* in Mordecai's name. **23** And when inquisition was

12 Or, *Bigthana*, chap. 6. 2.—13 Heb. *the threshold*.—*n* Chap. 6. 2.

renthesis, and is designed, as a circumstantial clause, to show that Esther was obedient to Mordecai as "such after she became queen as before. It also shows that this second collection of virgins sprang from no prejudice against Esther as a Jewess.

**21. Bigthan**—Probably the same as *Bigtha*, chap. i, 10. Called *Bigthana* in chap. vi, 2. **Which kept the door**—Literally, *guards of the threshold*. Being doorkeepers, like Mordecai, the latter was able the more readily to learn of their conspiracy. Such conspiracies among the officers of the court were common in the East, and many a monarch (and subsequently even Xerxes himself) fell by the hand of assassins.

**23. Hanged on a tree**—This punishment was performed by the Persians by crucifying or impaling. Grecian writings and the Behistun inscription frequently mention this kind of execution. The criminal



From Assyrian Monuments.

was sometimes first slain, but generally impaled alive. **The book of the chronicles**—Official records, made and kept by the royal scribes, and constituting a body of state papers or annals. See note on Ezra iv, 15, 2 Sam. viii, 17, and Introduction to Kings, on the sources.

made of the matter, it was found out, therefore they were both hanged on a tree: and it was written in "the book of the chronicles before the king.

### CHAPTER III.

**A**FTER these things did king Ahasuerus promote Haman the son of Hammedatha the "Agagite, and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him. **2** And all the king's servants, that were <sup>b</sup> in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the

o Chap. 6. 1.—*a* Num. 24. 7; 1 Sam. 15. 8.  
b Chap. 2. 19.

### CHAPTER III.

HAMAN'S PROMOTION, AND THE EDICT AGAINST THE JEWS, 1-15.

**1. Haman the son of Hammedatha**—"The name Haman is probably the same which is found in the classical writers under the form of *Omanes*, and which in ancient Persian would have been *Umana*, or *Umanish*, an exact equivalent of the Greek *Eumenes*. Hammedatha is, perhaps, the same as *Mudata* or *Mahudata*, (*Madates* of Q. Curtius,) an old Persian name signifying 'given by (or to) the moon.'"—*Rawlinson*. **The Agagite**—Perhaps a descendant of Agag, the Amalekite. 1 Sam. xv, 9, 32. It was no impossible thing for a descendant of the royal family of Amalek to become an officer in the court of Persia. Some, however, suggest that *the Agagite* is an epithet which Jewish hatred has applied to Haman, with the design of associating him with the hated Amalekite. **Set his seat above all the princes**—Made him his chief favourite and prime minister. Thus Nebuchadnezzar and Darius honoured Daniel, who was also a foreigner. Dan. ii, 48; vi, 1-3.

**2. The king's servants... bowed**—This was but a mark of respect to any officer of high rank, and is a common custom in all courts. **Reverenced Haman**—The Hebrew involves the idea of prostrate reverence as to a superior being—bowing on the knees, and touching the forehead to the ground. כִּשְׁתָּחוּיִם. Septuagint, προσεκύνουν, fell prostrate, worshipped. Vulgate, *Flectebant genua et adorabant*--

king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai <sup>c</sup> bowed not, nor did *him* reverence. **3** Then the king's servants, which *were* in the king's gate, said unto Mordecai, Why transgressest thou the <sup>d</sup> king's commandment? **4** Now it came to pass, when they spake daily unto him, and he hearkened not unto them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's matters would stand: for he had told them that he *was* a Jew. **5** And when Haman saw that Mordecai <sup>e</sup> bowed

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 5; Psa. 15. 4. — <sup>d</sup> Ver. 2. — <sup>e</sup> Ver. 2; chap.

*bowed their knees and adored.* The Chaldee paraphrase has it that they bowed down to a statue which had been set up in honour of Haman. This at once explains why **Mordecai bowed not.** Haman required worship like a god, and this would have been idolatry with a Jew. Mordecai is represented in the apocryphal Esther (xiii, 12) as praying: "Thou knowest, Lord, that it was neither in contempt nor pride that I did not bow down to Haman; for I would have been glad, for the salvation of Israel, to kiss the soles of his feet. But I did this that I might not glorify man more than God; neither would I worship any, O God, but thee."

**3. Why transgressest thou?**—Mordecai answered this question, as we learn from the next verse, by confessing that he was a Jew, and the rules of his religion would not allow him to offer the semblance of divine honours to a mortal.

**4. He hearkened not unto them**—He would not be persuaded from his purpose to remain true to the principles of his religion. His course was dictated, not by obstinacy, but by firmness of religious principle. Herodotus (vii, 136) relates the case of certain Spartans who visited Shushan in the time of Xerxes, and, when ushered into the royal presence, refused to prostrate themselves and worship the king, on the ground that it was contrary to their customs to worship a man. **They told Haman**—Until they told him, Haman seems not to have noticed that Mordecai did not bow down to him. **Whether Mordecai's matters would stand**—Whether the religious

not, nor did him reverence, then was Haman <sup>f</sup> full of wrath. **6** And he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone; for they had showed him the people of Mordecai: wherefore Haman <sup>g</sup> sought to destroy all the Jews that *were* throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, *even* the people of Mordecai. **7** In the first month, that *is*, the month Nisan, in the twelfth year of king Ahasuerus, <sup>h</sup> they cast Pur, that *is*, the lot, before Haman from day to day, and from month

<sup>5. 9.</sup> — <sup>f</sup> Dan. 3. 19. — <sup>g</sup> Psa. 83. 4. — <sup>h</sup> Chap. 9. 24.

scruples of a Jew would be tolerated in opposition to Persian laws and customs.

**6. He thought scorn**—Literally, *it was contemptible in his eyes.* To punish Mordecai alone was too little a thing, in his estimation, to reconcile his offended honour. The whole nation or race of Mordecai must perish to make atonement for this his sole offence. Such wholesale massacres were not uncommon in the East. For the offence of the pseudo-Smerdis the Persians sought to destroy all the Magi, and even celebrated the event by a festival called *Magophonia*—"the slaughter of the Magi."—*Herod.*, iii, 79. Such a tyrant as Xerxes, with such a minister as Haman were just the men to cause such slaughter upon slight provocation.

**7. The first month... Nisan**—Corresponding nearly with our April. It was the first month of the Jewish year, the month of the passover. *Exod.* xii, 2. It was called also *Abib.* *Exod.* xiii, 4; xxxiv, 18. **They cast Pur**—Pur is a Persian word, and, according to our author, signifies **the lot.** Haman's diviners cast lots before him in order to determine a favourable or lucky day for carrying out his fierce design against the Jews. "The practice of casting lots," says Rawlinson, "to obtain a lucky day, obtains still in the East, and is probably extremely ancient. Assyrian calendars note lucky and unlucky days as early as the eighth century B. C. Lots were in use both among the oriental and the classical nations from a remote antiquity. **From day to day**—We are not to understand that they

to month, to the twelfth month, that is, the month Adar. 8 And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus, There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and <sup>1</sup>their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not

*i* Ezra 4. 13; Acts 16. 20.—*1* Heb. *meet*, or, *equal*.

spent a whole year in casting lots. On the first month they cast lots for each day of the month, and for each month of the year, and then, comparing all together, decided which was the most lucky day for their purpose. They fixed upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month. Verse 13; viii, 12; ix, 1. **To the twelfth month**—Literally, *from month to month the twelfth*. The twelfth month was called **Adar**, and corresponds nearly with our March. We should not fail to observe the providence that so disposed the lot in this case (Prov. xvi, 33) as to defer the execution of Haman's bloody design for nearly a year, thus affording time for Mordecai and Esther to secure its defeat.

8. **A certain people scattered abroad**—Emphatically such were the Jews at this time. From the fall of Samaria, (2 Kings xvii, 6,) the tribes of Israel had become more and more dispersed among the people in all the provinces of the East, until their tribe divisions could be now but faintly recognised. Many had returned to Jerusalem, as the Book of Ezra shows, and others returned afterwards, but thousands more continued to dwell in the various countries whither they had become dispersed. **Their laws are diverse from all people**—The Jews were, unquestionably, "a peculiar people," and adherence to their customs

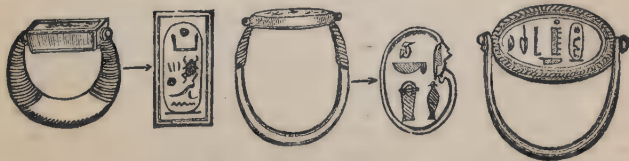
<sup>1</sup> for the king's profit to suffer them. 9 If it please the king, let it be written <sup>2</sup> that they may be destroyed: and I will <sup>3</sup> pay ten thousand talents of silver to the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring ~~it~~ into the king's treasuries. 10 And the king <sup>4</sup> took <sup>5</sup> his ring from his hand, and gave it unto Ha-

2 Heb. *to destroy them*.—3 Heb. *weigh*.  
4 Gen. 41. 42.—5 Chap. 8. 2, 8.

brought Mordecai and Haman into conflict. **Neither keep they the king's laws**—Mordecai's offence was not the first instance of a Jew's refusal, from religious scruples, to keep the laws of the heathen kings. Instance the case of Daniel and his companions, (Dan. i, 8; iii, 16-18; vi, 10,) and compare the charge of the Samaritan chiefs, Ezra iv, 12-16.

9. **Ten thousand talents of silver**—Nearly \$1,700,000. Haman doubtless expected to pay this amount from the Jewish spoils. Compare verse 13. **Those that have the charge of the business**—Namely, the business of superintending, receiving, and depositing the revenues of the kingdom.

10. **Took his ring...and gave it unto Haman**—This was done for the purpose of sealing with irrevocable authority the letters which Haman designed (see verse 12) to send to all the rulers of the provinces; "for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse." Chap. viii, 8. Many ancient signet rings have been discovered, some made of gold, others of various kinds of stone. Those made of stone are usually cylindrical. The signet cylinder of Darius Hystaspes bears a trilingual inscription which reads, "Darius the Great King," and also a picture of the king hunting lions in a palm grove.



Egyptian Rings and Signets.

man the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the Jews' enemy. **11** And the king said unto Haman, The silver is given to thee, the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee. **12** Then were the king's scribes called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and there was written according to all that Haman had commanded unto the king's lieutenants, and to the governors that were over every province, and to the rulers of every people of every province according to the writing thereof, and to every people after their language; in the name of king Ahasuerus was it written, and sealed with the king's ring. **13** And the let-

ters were sent by posts into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey. **14** The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province was published unto all people, that they should be ready against that day. **15** The posts went out, being hastened by the king's commandment, and the decree was given in Shushan the palace. And the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city Shushan was perplexed.

4 Or, oppressor, chap. 7. 6. — m Chap. 8. 9.  
5 Or, secretaries. — n Chap. 1. 22; 8. 9.  
o 1 Kings 21. 8; chap. 8. 8, 10.

p Chap. 8. 10. — q Chap. 8. 12, &c. — r Chap. 8. 11. — s Chap. 8. 13, 14. — t See chap. 8. 15; Prov. 29. 2.

**11. The silver is given to thee**—Instead of bringing the spoil of silver into the royal treasury, Haman is permitted to keep it for himself. Xerxes was the only Persian despot whose favouritism, vanity, and prodigality would readily allow such a loss from his own treasury.

**12. The king's scribes**—See note on 2 Sam. viii, 17. **The thirteenth day**—Having fixed on the thirteenth of Adar (verse 13) for the execution of his bloody design, he seems to have purposely selected the corresponding day of the first month for the beginning of his work. **Lieutenants**—Satraps. See note on Ezra viii, 36. **Governors**—Or prefects. On this word, which is rendered *deputies* in chap. viii, 9 and ix, 3, see notes, Ezra v, 3 and 2 Kings xviii, 24. **Rulers**—Or princes. **The writing... their language**—See note on chap. i, 22.

**13. Sent by posts**—See note on chap. i, 22 for the Persian system of letter carrying. **To destroy... in one day**—Some have thought that eleven months' previous notice of such a decree would have frustrated Haman's design, since it would have afforded the Jews opportunity to escape from the dominions of Xerxes. But the procedure was by no means incredible. We know too little of the exact circumstances of the dispersed Jews of that time, and the extent of country through which they were dis-

persed, to form a positive judgment in the case. Multitudes may have been in such a state of bondage as to make it impossible for any great number of them to escape; and as for others, it may have been expected and desired that some of them would leave the kingdom. But such as Mordecai, whom Haman especially wished to destroy, could not leave the kingdom any more than Nehemiah (compare Neh. ii, 6; xiii, 6) without permission from the king. It was also in keeping with Haman's character to cause all the anguish and horror possible to the Jews in anticipation of the dreadful day of slaughter. Then we must remember, as observed above on verse 7, that a wise Providence so overruled this whole procedure as to bring to naught the plans of the Jews' enemy, and make his malignant hatred of the Jews the occasion of his ruin.

**15. The king and Haman sat down to drink**—Like the most cool and bloodthirsty tyrants. **Shushan was perplexed**—There were many Jews in Shushan, as we may infer from chap. ix, 12, and these would at once be filled with horror and dismay. And with this feeling every thoughtful citizen would naturally sympathize, and wonder what would be the end of such a system of wholesale slaughter. No such massacre could be carried out without incalculable danger to many others besides the Jews.

## CHAPTER IV.

**W**HEN Mordecai perceived all that was done, Mordecai <sup>a</sup>rent his clothes, and put on sackcloth <sup>b</sup>with ashes, and went out into the midst of the city, and <sup>c</sup>cried with a loud and a bitter cry; **2** And came even before the king's gate: for none *might* enter into the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. **3** And in every province, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, and fasting, and weeping, and wailing; and <sup>d</sup>many lay in sackcloth and ashes. **4** So Esther's maids and her <sup>e</sup>chamberlains came and told *it* her. Then was the queen exceedingly grieved; and she sent raiment to clothe Mordecai, and to take away

<sup>a</sup> 2 Sam. 1. 11.—<sup>b</sup> Josh. 7. 6; Ezek. 27. 30.—<sup>c</sup> Gen. 27. 34.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Heb. *sackcloth and ashes were laid under many*, Isa. 58. 5; Dan. 9. 3.—<sup>e</sup> 2 Heb.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MOURNING AND FASTING, 1-17.

"The plot seemed perfect. Everything had been well considered and as well devised. Swift messengers had been sent to all the provinces, directing the slaughter of the Jews on a given day, and even the selection by lot of an auspicious day had not been overlooked. What was wanting? Nothing that human calculation could have provided. Yet when the Lord blew upon this grand contrivance, it became as the desert sand before the wind, and overwhelmed the contriver."  
—*Kitto*.

**1. Mordecai rent his clothes**—The customary sign of bitter grief. See 2 Sam. i, 11, note. A like sign was also the putting on of **sackcloth** and sitting in **ashes**, (Job ii, 8; Jonah iii, 6,) or sprinkling ashes upon the head. Mordecai also, in expression of his most intense agony, **cried with a loud and a bitter cry**. Compare Gen. xxvii, 34. Similar exhibitions of grief were customary with the Persians. When tidings of Xerxes' defeat at Salamis reached Shushan all the people "rent their garments and uttered unbounded shouts and lamentations."—*Herod.*, viii, 99.

**2. None might enter...with sackcloth**—For that would bear the semblance of an evil omen to the king.

his sackcloth from him: but he received *it* not. **5** Then called Esther for Hatach, *one* of the king's chamberlains, <sup>3</sup>whom he had appointed to attend upon her, and gave him a commandment to Mordecai, <sup>4</sup>to know what *it was*, and why *it was*. **6** So Hatach went forth to Mordecai unto the street of the city, which *was* before the king's gate. **7** And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and of <sup>e</sup>the sum of the money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them. **8** Also he gave him <sup>f</sup>the copy of the writing of the decree that was given at Shushan to destroy them, to show *it* unto Esther, and to declare *it* unto her, and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, <sup>g</sup>to make

*eunuchs*.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *when he had set before her*.—<sup>d</sup> Rom. 12. 15; 1 Cor. 12. 26.—<sup>e</sup> Chap. 3. 9.—<sup>f</sup> Chap. 3. 14, 15.—<sup>g</sup> Prov. 16. 14, 15; Acts 12. 20.

**4. Told it her**—Told her of the grief of Mordecai and the Jews, but they seem not to have told her its cause. **Grieved**—She was grieved to learn of her cousin's miserable appearance and bitter mourning. **She sent raiment**—Hoping to remove his sorrow, and to take away his reproach, for his **sackcloth** exposed him to the derision of the courtiers. **He received it not**—His sorrow was too deep to be thus removed.

**5. What it was, and why it was**—Literally, *what this, and why this?* She had not been informed of the terrible decree.

**6. The street of the city**—The broad open place before the palace. Compare Ezra x, 9; vii, 1, notes.

**7. The sum of the money**—Rather, *a statement of the silver*. The word here rendered *sum* is פְּרִשֶׁת, and occurs again only at chap. x, 2, where it is rendered *declaration*. It means a distinct or accurate statement. Mordecai told Hatach what had befallen him, and gave him also a statement of the silver Haman had promised to bring into the king's treasury.

**8. Charge her...to make supplication**—A perilous undertaking to urge upon her. But Mordecai's faith already began to discern a divine reason for her elevation in the kingdom at that time. See verse 14.

supplication unto him, and to make request before him for her people. **9** And Hatach came and told Esther the words of Mordecai. **10** Again Esther spake unto Hatach, and gave him commandment unto Mordecai; **11** All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into <sup>h</sup>the inner court, who is not called, <sup>i</sup>there is one law of his to put him to death, except such <sup>k</sup>to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days. **12** And they told to Mordecai Esther's words. **13** Then Mor-

decai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. **14** For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there <sup>l</sup>enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this? **15** Then Esther bade them return Mordecai *this answer*, **16** Go, gather together all the Jews that are <sup>m</sup>present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink <sup>n</sup>three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go

<sup>h</sup> Chapter 5. 1.—<sup>i</sup> Daniel 2. 9.—<sup>k</sup> Chapter 5. 2; 8. 4.

<sup>l</sup> 4 Heb. *respiration*, Job 9. 18.—<sup>m</sup> 5 Heb. *found*.  
<sup>n</sup> 1 Chap. 5. 1.

**11. The inner court**—The court that faced the principal audience hall—the throne chamber—where alone it would be practicable for Esther to see the king on such a business. See on chap. v. 1. **There is one law of his to put him to death**—Literally, *one is his law to put to death*; that is, the king's law or custom is one and unchangeable—to put such intruders to death. This law receives confirmation from Herodotus, iii, 84, 118. **Hold out the golden sceptre**—"In all the numerous representations of Persian kings at Persepolis, there is not one in which the monarch does not hold a long, tapering staff in his right hand."—*Rawlinson*. This was one of the emblems of royalty which he seems ever to have had about his person. **But I have not been called. . . these thirty days**—This was Esther's greatest difficulty. At other times, when her intercourse with the king was frequent, she might have ventured, with little or no fear, unbidden into his presence. But not having been invited to go in to the king for a month, she had reason to fear that he did not wish to see her, and it would be specially perilous to approach him publicly in the great throne chamber.

We have here a glimpse of female life in the harem of a Persian king. Days and months might elapse, and a wife not see her lord. How could it well be otherwise, where wives and concubines were numbered by hun-

dreds? Herodotus says (iii, 79) that the Persian wives visited their husbands by turns, but this rule was probably not regularly followed.

**13. Think not. . . that thou shalt escape**—The fearful decree as surely included a Jewess in the royal harem, as a Jewish porter at the king's gate.

**14. Enlargement**—*רחוּץ*, *breathing room*; freedom from restraint. Compare the kindred word rendered *respite* in Exod. viii, 15. **Deliverance arise. . . another place**—Note the faith of Mordecai. He is confident his nation cannot perish. Help will come from some quarter. **Who knoweth?**—Mordecai discerns a divine providence in Esther's attaining to the royal dignity. God had elevated her to a position in which she might be the principal agent in effecting the salvation of her people, and hence she is warned that if she fails in the duty of that hour, Divine vengeance will most surely fall on her and all her father's house.

**16. Fast ye. . . three days**—The perilous enterprise, in which she would be so liable to **perish**, was not to be undertaken without much fasting and prayer. Though prayer is not mentioned, it undoubtedly accompanied the fasting, as in the cases of Nehemiah (i, 4) and Daniel, (ix. 3.) **Night or day**—Sometimes fasting was observed for many days, but intermitted at night. This special fast was to have no intermission.

in unto the king, which is not according to the law: <sup>m</sup> and if I perish, I perish. **17** So Mordecai <sup>e</sup> went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him.

*m* See Gen. 43. 14. — *e* Heb. *passed*.

## CHAPTER V.

### ESTHER'S RECEPTION AND THE BANQUET, 1-8.

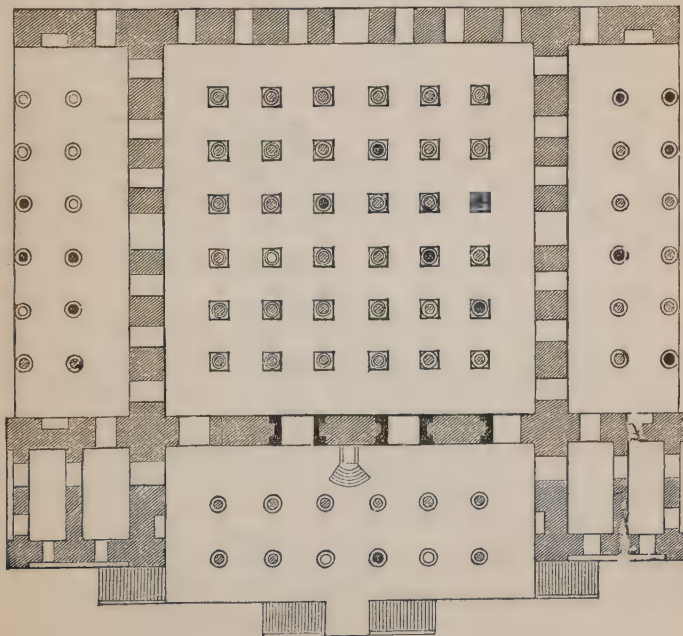
**1. On the third day**—"The third day must be counted from the day of the transaction between the queen and Mordecai, (iv, 14,) the first day being that on which it took place. The fasting, then, would not begin till midday; and on the third day Esther went to the king to invite him on that day to a banquet, which would surely take place in the forenoon. Thus the three days' fast would last from the afternoon of the first to the forenoon of the third day—from forty to forty-five hours."—

## CHAPTER V.

**N**OW it came to pass <sup>a</sup> on the third day, that Esther put on *her* royal *apparel*, and stood in <sup>b</sup> the inner court of the king's house, over against the

*a* Chap. 4. 16. — *b* Chap. 4. 11; chap. 6. 4.

*Keil. Put on her royal apparel*—Literally, *put on royalty*. She would appear in proper attire on this important occasion. **The inner court of the king's house**—This must have been situated directly in front of the royal audience chamber, or "throne room," where the monarch was wont to sit when receiving ministers of state, and attending to the business of the empire. The annexed cut presents a restored plan (by Fergusson) of the Great Hall of Xerxes at Persepolis, which corresponds in all its main features with the palace of Shushan. The great central hall has thirty-six columns, and is surrounded on three sides



Xerxes' Hall at Persepolis.

king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house. **2** And it was so, when the king saw Esther the queen standing in the court, *that* <sup>c</sup>she obtained favour in his sight: and <sup>d</sup>the king held out to Esther the golden sceptre that *was* in his hand. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of the sceptre. **3** Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what *is* thy request? <sup>e</sup>"it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom. **4** And Esther answered, <sup>f</sup>"If *it seem good unto*

<sup>c</sup> Proverbs 21. 1. — <sup>d</sup> Chapter 4. 11; 8. 4.  
<sup>e</sup> So Mark 6. 23.

by great porches, each two hundred feet wide by sixty-five feet deep, and each supported by twelve columns. These porches, says Fergusson, "were beyond doubt the great audience halls of the palace, and served the same purpose as the 'house of the forest of Lebanon' in Solomon's palace, though its dimensions were somewhat different—one hundred and fifty feet by seventy-five. These porches were also identical, so far as use and arrangement go, with the throne rooms in the palaces of Delhi and Agra, or those which are used at this day in the palace of Ispahan. The western porch would be appropriate to morning ceremonies, the eastern to those of the afternoon. There was no porch, as we might expect in that climate, to the south, but the principal one, both at Susa and Persepolis, was that which faced the north, with a slight inclination to the east. It was the throne room, *par excellence*, of the palace, and an inspection of the plan will show how easily, by the arrangement of the stairs, a whole army of courtiers or of tribute bearers could file before the king without confusion or inconvenience." *The inner court*, in front of this audience room, was probably so called in contradistinction to an outer court beyond it. These courts communicated with each other by means of **the gate of the house**, so called from being the main entrance from the north to the vast pile of buildings that constituted *the king's house*. Thus as **the king sat** in this throne room of the northern porch, he could look right down from

the king, let the king and Haman come this day unto the banquet that I have prepared for him. **5** Then the king said, Cause Haman to make haste, that he may do as Esther hath said. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had prepared. **6** <sup>g</sup>And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, <sup>h</sup>"What *is* thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what *is* thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed. **7** Then answered Esther, and said, My petition and my request *is*; **8** If I have found

<sup>f</sup> Proverbs 29. 11. — <sup>g</sup> Chapter 7. 2.  
<sup>h</sup> Chapter 9. 12.

his elevated position across *the inner court*, and could see any one who stood there, or approached him by way of the gate, which was **over against**, or directly opposite, his royal throne.

**3. The half of the kingdom**—Compare Mark vi, 23. Herodotus (ix, 109) relates that Xerxes, having fallen in love with a woman named Artayute, promised and swore to give her whatsoever she might ask of him.

**4. The king and Haman**—She would have Haman present with the king when she makes her accusation, that he may have no chance to turn the king's mind from the view of his wicked plot which she proposes to present. **This day unto the banquet that I have prepared**—Great was her prudence and caution in not making known her request publicly, and equal wisdom was evinced by having the banquet already prepared, that with the least possible delay she might thoroughly commit the king to her wishes. These measures rendered more probable the desired accomplishment of her plans.

**6. At the banquet of wine**—This probably followed a banquet of meats. The Persians, says Herodotus, (i, 133,) are very moderate at their meals, but eat of many after dishes, and are much addicted to wine. The king understood, or suspected, that Esther had some **petition** or **request** besides the mere coming to her banquet, and so when he began to be "merry with wine," he again called upon her to make her desire known, and again renewed his pledge.

favour in the sight of the king, and if it please the king to grant my petition, and <sup>1</sup>to perform my request, let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do to-morrow as the king hath said.

9 Then went Haman forth that day joyful and with a glad heart: but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, <sup>1</sup>that he stood not up, nor moved for him, he was full of indignation against Mordecai. 10 Nevertheless Haman <sup>2</sup>restrained himself: and when he came home, he sent and <sup>2</sup>called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. 11 And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and <sup>1</sup>the multitude of his children, and all *the things* wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had <sup>3</sup>advanced him above the princes and servants of the

1 Heb. *to do*.—i Chap. 3. 5.—k So 2 Sam. 13. 22.—2 Heb. *caused to come*.—l Chap. 9. 7, &c.—m Chap. 3. 1.

8. **To-morrow**—Her heart seems to fail her when the decisive moment comes. She hopes, by another day, to be better prepared to present her case successfully. **As the king hath said**—That is, make known the request.

#### HAMAN'S INDIGNATION AT MORDECAI, 9-14.

9. **Joyful**—At the thought of receiving such honour from the king and queen. **Mordecai... stood not up, nor moved**—From this it seems that after Mordecai knew Haman's wicked plans against the Jews he purposely refused him all signs of respect. His inmost soul despised Haman, and he took no pains to conceal his feeling, but seems rather to have intentionally offended him. **Full of indignation**—A cloud suddenly covers his joy. The heart that is exceedingly proud and lifted up is easily offended, and he who "thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone" (chap. iii, 6) finds all his honour of no avail from the mere lack of respect shown him by this one man.

10. **His friends**—His intimate associates and companions—diviners and wise men (iii, 7; vi, 13)—with whom he met in councils and in festivities.

11. **The glory of his riches**—That is, the extent and abundance of his riches. **The multitude of his children**—His ten sons are mentioned in

king. 12 Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. 13 <sup>a</sup>Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate. 14 Then said Zeresh his wife and all his friends unto him, Let a <sup>3</sup>gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and to-morrow <sup>p</sup>speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon: then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused <sup>q</sup>the gallows to be made.

#### CHAPTER VI.

**O**N that night <sup>1</sup>could not the king sleep, and he commanded to bring

n 1 Kings 21. 4, 6; Job 15. 20.—3 Heb. *tree*.—o Chap. 7. 9.—p Chap. 6. 4.—q Chap. 7. 10.—1 Heb. *the king's sleep fled away*.

chap. ix, 10, and he had, probably, several grandsons. Herodotus says of the Persians, (i, 136,) "Next to bravery in battle, this is considered the greatest proof of manliness—to be able to exhibit many children; and to such as can exhibit the greatest number the king sends presents every year, for numbers are considered strength."

14. **Let a gallows**—Hebrew, *a tree*, or *wood*: that is, a lofty beam or post for impalement; not a *gallows*, or gibbet, in the ordinary sense. Compare Gen. xl, 19; Deut. xxi, 22, 23. Hanging with a rope by the neck seems not to have been a Persian mode of punishment, but impalement was common. See note on chap. ii, 23. Haman's wife and friends proposed to make the post of wood for Mordecai's execution **fifty cubits high**—seventy-five feet—so as to make his impalement as conspicuous and as ignominious as possible.

#### CHAPTER VI.

##### MORDECAI HONOURED, 1-14.

1. **That night**, which succeeded the events of the last chapter, settled with apparently a most ominous cloud upon the future of Mordecai, but it was the harbinger of a most auspicious day for him. God, who works in the darkness as in the light, caused sleep to flee from the king, and disposed him to be-

\* the book of records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. **2** And it was found written, that Mordecai had told of <sup>2</sup> Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's chamberlains, the keepers of the <sup>3</sup> door, who sought to lay hand on the king Ahasuerus. **3** And the king said, What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this? Then said the king's servants that ministered unto him, There is nothing done for him. **4** And the king said, Who *is* in the court? Now Haman was come into <sup>b</sup> the outward court of the king's house, <sup>c</sup> to speak unto the king to hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 2. 23.—<sup>2</sup> Or, *Bigthan*, chap. 2. 21.—<sup>3</sup> Heb. *threshold*.—<sup>b</sup> See chap. 5. 1.—<sup>c</sup> Chap. 5. 14.—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *in whose honour the king delighteth?*

guile the wakeful hours, not with music or song, but by having one read to him from **the book of records of the chronicles**. His mind was in a mood to ruminate on the events of his own life, and the State annals (see on chap. ii, 23) were called for to assist his memory. Rawlinson thinks that the Persian kings were, in most cases, unable to read.

### 3. What honour... to Mordecai—

We have a life-picture here. We seem to see the excited monarch start up and raise this question, as if some great duty had been forgotten. "It was a settled principle of the Persian government that 'royal benefactors' were to receive adequate reward. The names of such persons were placed on a special roll, (*Herod.*, viii, 85,) and great care was taken that they should be properly recompensed. See *Herod.*, iii, 140; v, 11; viii, 85; *Thucyd.*, i, 138; *Xen.*, '*Hel.*' iii; i, 6. It is a mistake, however, to suppose (Davidson) that they were always rewarded *at once*. The mistocles was inscribed on the list in B. C. 480, but did not obtain a reward until B. C. 465. Other benefactors waited for months, (*Herod.*, v, 11,) or perhaps years, (*ib.*, ix, 107,) before they were recompensed. Sometimes a benefactor seems to have received no reward at all. (*Ib.*, iii, 138.")—*Rawlinson*.

**4. Who is in the court—**The king's soul, after that sleepless night, was burdened with impatient desire to honour his benefactor. Haman, on the

prepared for him. **5** And the king's servants said unto him, Behold, Haman standeth in the court. And the king said, Let him come in. **6** So Haman came in. And the king said unto him, What shall be done unto the man <sup>a</sup> whom the king delighteth to honour? Now Haman thought in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honour more than to myself? **7** And Haman answered the king, For the man <sup>b</sup> whom the king delighteth to honour, **8** <sup>c</sup> Let the royal apparel be brought <sup>d</sup> which the king *useth* to wear; and <sup>e</sup> the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head:

<sup>5</sup> Heb. *in whose honour the king delighteth*.—<sup>6</sup> Heb. *Let them bring the royal apparel*.—<sup>7</sup> Heb. *wherewith the king clotheth himself*.—<sup>d</sup> 1 Kings 1. 33.

other hand, was equally impatient to see Mordecai hung upon the lofty stake he had erected. The king waits in the early morning for his chief prince to come and advise him how best to honour this loyal Jew, and Haman also is waiting to be called that he may **speak unto the king to hang Mordecai**—Mark the wonderful workings of Providence!

### 6. Haman thought in his heart—

The proud and self-conceited heart always thinks, like Haman, that nothing so much deserves honour as itself.

### 8. Royal apparel... horse... the crown royal...

This was a rare honour to be bestowed on any subject, even on a royal benefactor. Haman would hardly have proposed it had he not thought that he himself would be the favoured one. But Xerxes was just the man to bestow honours which would have been treasonable if self-assumed on the part of the subject. This same monarch, according to Herodotus, (vii, 17,) once ordered Artabanus, his uncle, to put on the royal apparel, sit on the royal throne, and then sleep in the royal bed. **The crown royal... upon his head**—That is, upon the horse's head; for this is clearly the import of the Hebrew text. We translate literally: *And a horse on which the king is wont to ride, and on whose head is set a royal crown*. Most readers would naturally suppose that the crown would be placed on the head of the rider, not of the horse; but verses 10 and 11,

**9** And let this apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that they may array the man *withal* whom the king delighteth to honour, and <sup>8</sup>bring him on horseback through the street of the city, <sup>6</sup>and proclaim before him, Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour. **10** Then the king said to Haman, Make haste, *and* take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: <sup>7</sup>let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken. **11** Then took Haman the apparel and the horse, and arrayed Mordecai, and brought him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaimed before him, Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour. **12** And Mordecai came again to the king's gate. But Haman <sup>9</sup>hasted to his house mourning, <sup>8</sup>and having his head covered. **13** And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all his

friends *every thing* that had befallen him. Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him, If Mordecai *be* of the seed of the Jews, before whom thou hast begun to fall, thou shalt not prevail against him, <sup>10</sup>but shalt surely fall before him. **14** And while they *were* yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hasted to bring Haman unto <sup>11</sup>the banquet that Esther had prepared.

## CHAPTER VII.

**S**O the king and Haman came <sup>12</sup>to banquet with Esther the queen. **2** And the king said again unto Esther on the second day <sup>13</sup>at the banquet of wine, What *is* thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted *thee*: and what *is* thy request? and it shall be performed, *even* to the half of the kingdom. **3** Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my

<sup>8</sup> Hebrew, *cause him to ride*.—*e* Gen. 41. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Hebrew, *suffer not a whit to fall*.—*f* 2 Chron. 26. 20.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Sam. 15. 30; Jer. 14. 3, 4.—*h* Job 16. 2; Hosea 14. 9.—*i* Chap. 5. 8.—*1* Heb. *to drink*.—*a* Chap. 5. 6.

which make special mention of Mordecai's array, say nothing of a crown. "We do not, indeed, find among the classical writers any testimony to such an adornment of the royal steed; but the circumstance is not at all improbable, and seems to be corroborated by ancient remains, certain Assyrian and ancient Persian sculptures representing the horses of the king, and apparently those of princes, with ornaments on their heads, terminating in three points, which may be regarded as a kind of crown."—*Keil*.

**10. Do even so to Mordecai**—How must Haman's countenance have fallen at these words, and with what chagrin must he have gone forth to execute the king's command! This was the beginning of his fall.

**12. Mordecai came again to the king's gate**—That is, resumed his position as one of the royal porters. His honour did not so puff him up that he could not cheerfully return again to his humble office. But the mortified Haman covered his head with a vail to hide, as he thought, his shame, and ran home crying, to tell his wife and friends his sorrow.

**13. His wise men**—His counsellors and advisers, among whom were the diviners who cast lots before him. Chap. iii, 7. These were the same as **his friends**. See note on chap. v, 10. **Thou shalt not prevail against him**—His diviners now hesitate not to predict his fall. If his enemy is **of the seed of the Jews**—a new and startling fact that seems suddenly to have impressed these wise men—then it is certain that the Providence which has ever been such a wondrous power in the Jewish nation, and which has now so strangely elevated Mordecai at the very moment when Haman thought to have slain him, will cause the Jew to triumph.

**14. Hasted to bring Haman**—The avenging fates seem to hurry him to his doom.

## CHAPTER VII.

HAMAN CONVICTED AND HANGED, 1-10.

**2. The king said again**—Compare chap. v, 6, note.

**3. My life...my people**—Esther has had time to carefully prepare her words, and her earnest language rises to the emotionality of poetic parallel

people at my request: **4** For we are sold, I and my people, <sup>2</sup> to be destroyed, and to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage. **5** Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, <sup>3</sup> that durst presume in his heart to do so? **6** And Esther said, 'The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid <sup>5</sup> before

<sup>b</sup> Chap. 3. 9; 4. 7. — <sup>2</sup> Heb. *that they should destroy, and kill, and cause to perish.* — <sup>3</sup> Heb. *whose heart hath filled him.* — <sup>4</sup> Heb.

isms. We may throw her address into the following form:—

If I have found favour in thine eyes, O king,  
And if to the king it seem good,  
Let my life be given me at my petition,  
And my people at my request.  
For we are sold—I and my people—  
To be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish.  
If, now, for slaves and for bondwomen we  
were sold I had been silent,  
For the enemy is not to be compared with the  
injury of the king.

**4. We are sold**—Allusion to Haman's offer to pay into the king's treasury ten thousand talents. Chap. iii, 9. **Destroyed... slain... perish**—She quotes the very words of the fearful edict, (chap. iii, 13,) and thus gives a most telling point and emphasis to her plea. **Although the enemy**—This sentence is obscure, and, perhaps, Esther meant that it should be ambiguous. The common version conveys the meaning that if the Jews were all sold into slavery, their enemy, who brought that woe upon them, could not, by any payment into the king's treasury, recompense him for the loss he would sustain. But the Hebrew seems to make this last sentence give a reason for Esther's keeping silence; namely, because (כִּי) she does not con-

sider the enemy worthy of the trouble and injury it must cost the king to punish him, and counteract the decree of death that has gone forth against the Jews. **The enemy** to whom she contemptuously refers is, of course, Haman. **Countervail**—שָׁוָה, the Kal

participial, meaning, *to be equal with; to be compared with.* נֶזַק, damage, may

the king and the queen. **7** And the king arising from the banquet of wine in his wrath *went* into the palace garden: and Haman stood up to make request for his life to Esther the queen; <sup>c</sup> for he saw that there was evil determined against him by the king. **8** Then the king returned out of the palace garden into the place of the banquet of wine; and Haman was fallen upon <sup>d</sup> the bed whereon Esther *was*. Then said the king, Will he force the queen also <sup>e</sup> before me in the house? As the word went out of

*The man adversary.*—<sup>5</sup> Or, *at the presence of.*—<sup>c</sup> 1 Sam. 20. 7, 9; 25. 17; Prov. 19. 12; Dan. 3. 19.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 1. 6.—<sup>e</sup> Heb. *with me.*

be here taken in the sense of injurious trouble, annoyance, vexation.

**5. Who is he**—If the king now suspected, as probably he did, who the guilty person was, he would naturally, first, express his emotion and surprise as here represented. "He affects to doubt," says Rawlinson, "that he may express his anger at the act apart from all personal considerations." Probably both Haman and the king now first learned, and were surprised to find, that Esther was a Jewess. **Who... is he that durst presume**—Literally, as the margin, *whose heart has filled him to do thus.* The evil and ambitious man is filled with foul thoughts and purposes from the corrupt fountain of his own wicked heart. Comp. Matt. xv, 19.

**6. This... Haman**—With flashing eye and impassioned gesture the queen now boldly exposes the man whom yesterday her heart failed her to expose.

**7. The palace garden**—The adjoining park, where the great feast was held nine years before. Chap. i, 5. **Haman stood up**—He rose from the banquet table, and besought Esther to shield him from the king's fury. He knew that "the wrath of a king is as messengers of death." Prov. xvi, 14.

**8. Haman was fallen upon the bed**—In the wild emotion and alarm of the moment, he had thrown himself upon the couch or divan on which Esther reclined at the banquet, and was supplicating for his life. **Will he force the queen**—The enraged monarch quickly construes the attitude of Haman into the worst possible offence. **As the word went**—Not the words of the

the king's mouth, they <sup>a</sup>covered Haman's face. **¶** And <sup>1</sup>Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king, Behold also <sup>a</sup>the <sup>7</sup>gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon. **10** So <sup>b</sup>they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath pacified.

<sup>e</sup> Job 9. 24. —<sup>f</sup> Chap. 1. 10. —<sup>g</sup> Chap. 5. 14; Psa. 7. 16; Prov. 11. 5, 6.

question just stated, but the word of judgment against Haman—the sentence to have him away at once to execution. **Covered Haman's face**—Muffled his head with a cloth or veil, preliminary to his execution. When the death warrant went out of the king's mouth, all was virtually over with Haman. The attendant chamberlains hurry him away to the more public executioners.

**9. Harbonah... said**—This eunuch had been many years in Xerxes' service. Comp. chap. i. 10. **Behold also the gallows**—"We are not told that the king said, Who is in the court? and they answered, Mordecai is in the outer court; and he said, Let him come in: nor that the king said, What shall be done to the man who has dishonoured the king and sought the life of the queen? and Mordecai said, Let him be hanged on a gallows fifty cubits high. Nothing of this kind happened. Haman resented the conduct of Mordecai in refusing him the honours of which he was so covetous. But Mordecai never touched a hair of his head. It was not he, but one of those who had been most lavish of their adulations, and had fawned most servilely upon him, who moved his death, and pointed to the mode of its execution."—*M' Crie*. In all the range of literature we find no more signal display of righteous retribution than in the death of Haman.

## CHAPTER VIII.

MORDECAI'S PROMOTION, AND EDICT IN BEHALF OF THE JEWS, 1-17.

**1. On that day**—The very day of Haman's execution. **Give the house of Haman**—By "the house of Haman" we are to understand not merely

## CHAPTER VIII.

**ON** that day did the king Abasuerus give the house of Haman the Jews' enemy unto Esther the queen. And Mordecai came before the king; for Esther had told <sup>a</sup>what he *was* unto her. **2** And the king took off <sup>b</sup>his ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it unto Mordecai. And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman. **3** And Esther spake yet again before

<sup>7</sup> Heb. *tree*. —<sup>h</sup> Psa. 37. 35, 36; Dan. 6. 24. <sup>a</sup> Chap. 2. 7. —<sup>b</sup> Chap. 3. 10.

his residence, but all his property, including servants, attendants, and the various paraphernalia that pertained to a Persian noble. The confiscation of the property of one publicly executed followed as a matter of course. This was a universal custom in the East. And to whom could the goods of **the Jews' enemy** be more appropriately transferred than **unto Esther the queen**? As yet the king did not know her relationship to Mordecai, but we naturally suppose that upon his giving her the house of Haman she made known to him that Mordecai was her cousin, and doubtless received his consent to consign her gift to his charge. See next verse. **Mordecai came before the king**—He was summoned by the king himself, who at once resolved to advance him to Haman's place in his court. Mordecai's loyalty and past service were fresh in the king's mind, and now when he learns his relationship to Esther, he feels that no better man can be found to stand in Haman's place.

**2. Took off his ring**—See note on chap. iii. 10. **Which he had taken from Haman**—When Haman was led forth to execution he was, of course, stripped of all seals and emblems of his office and authority, and all such insignia returned to the king. **Gave it unto Mordecai**—Thus transferring to a Jew the authority and emoluments lately enjoyed by the Agagite. It was no strange thing for eastern kings thus to honour foreigners. **And Esther set Mordecai**—She felt she could make no better disposal of her present than to give it to the keeping and use of her venerated relative and friend.

the king, and fell down at his feet, <sup>1</sup>and besought him with tears to put away the mischief of Haman the Agagite, and his device that he had devised against the Jews. **4** Then <sup>c</sup>the king held out the golden sceptre toward Esther. So Esther arose, and stood before the king. **5** And said, If it please ~~the~~ king, and if I have found favour in his sight, and the thing *seem* right before the king, and I *be* pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to reverse <sup>2</sup>the letters devised by Haman the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, <sup>3</sup>which he wrote to destroy the Jews which *are* in all the king's provinces: **6** For how can I <sup>4</sup>endure to see <sup>d</sup>the evil that shall come unto my people? or how can I en-

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *and she wept, and besought him.*—*c* Chap. 4. 11. <sup>5. 2.</sup>—<sup>2</sup> Heb. *the device.*—<sup>3</sup> Or, *who wrote.*—<sup>4</sup> Heb. *be able that I may see.*

**3. Esther spake yet again**—This was evidently on a subsequent day, and, as appears from the next verse, she again presented herself in the royal presence unsummoned, trusting to the favour of the king. **Fell down at his feet**—Her manner now showed more anxiety and feeling than when she appeared the first time in the court. Compare chap. v, 1, 2. **Besought him with tears**—Literally, *wept and made supplication to him.* Before, she invited him to a private banquet to make her petition; now she makes it known publicly, and with crying and tears. **The mischief of Haman**—The wicked devices of that enemy had not perished with his death. The decree for the destruction of the Jews remained still.

**4. Held out the golden sceptre**—We understand that the queen first came and fell weeping before the king, but said nothing until he held out the sceptre. Then she **arose, and stood before him**, and made the request of which a mere summary is given in the preceding verse. The language of her address is given in the two following verses.

**5. And said**—We do well to present Esther's address here, as at chap. vii, 3, in poetical form —

If to the king it seem good,  
And if I have found favour before him,  
And the thing seem right before the king,  
And I be good in his eyes;

dure to see <sup>e</sup>the destruction of my kindred? **7** Then the king Ahasuerus said unto Esther the queen and to Mordecai the Jew, Behold, <sup>f</sup>I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows, because he laid his hand upon the Jews. **8** Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal *it* with the king's ring: for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, <sup>g</sup>'may no man reverse. **9** <sup>h</sup>Then were the king's scribes called at that time in the third month, that *is*, the month Sivan, on the three and twentieth *day* thereof; and it was written according to all that Mordecai commanded unto the Jews, and to the

<sup>d</sup> Nehemiah 2. 3; chapter 7. 4.—<sup>e</sup> Verse 1; Proverbs 13. 22.—<sup>f</sup> See chapter 1. 19; Daniel 6. 8, 12, 15.—<sup>g</sup> Chapter 3. 12.

Let it be written to return the letters,  
The device of Haman, the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite,  
Which he wrote to destroy the Jews,  
Who are in all the provinces of the king.  
For how can I see the evil that will find my people?  
And how can I see the destruction of my kindred?

Perhaps Esther was not sufficiently acquainted with Persian law to know that no royal decree could be reversed.

**7. Behold, I have given**—The king, first of all, assures Esther and Mordecai of his kindly feeling towards the Jews, and points to the proofs of it. He felt, no doubt, that he was to blame for consenting to such a cruel edict, and now would convince Esther and her cousin that it sprang from no personal feelings of his own against the Jews.

**8. Write ye . . . as it liketh you**—He commits to them the task of devising some counter measure that will protect their people, and excuses himself from further action on the ground of the immutability of Persian law. No edict, however hasty and foolish, can be recalled, but there may be a most fearful conflict of laws. See note on chap. i, 19.

**9. The third month . . . Sivan**—Corresponding with our June: about two months after Haman's letters had been sent. **It was written according to all that Mordecai commanded**—How signally has Mordecai risen to

lieutenants, and the deputies and rulers of the provinces which *are*<sup>b</sup> from India unto Ethiopia, a hundred twenty and seven provinces, unto every province according to the writing thereof, and unto every people after their language, and to the Jews according to their writing, and according to their language. **10**<sup>k</sup> And he wrote in the king Ahasuerus' name, and sealed *it* with the king's ring, and sent letters by posts on horseback, and riders on mules, camels, and

<sup>h</sup> Chapter 1. 1.—<sup>i</sup> Chapter 1. 22; 3. 12.  
<sup>k</sup> 1 Kings 21. 8; chap. 3. 12, 13.

the power so recently wielded against himself and his kindred. Compare the language of chap. iii, 12. **Deputies**—Prefects or governors.

**10. Posts on horseback**—See notes on chap. i, 22; iii, 13. **Riders on mules**—Rather, on *swift coursers*. See note on 1 Kings iv, 28. The word is here a collective. **Camels**—The word **אַחֲשֵׁרָנִים** is of Persian origin, and means *royal*, or pertaining to the government. The most probable meaning is *royal steeds*. The word occurs only here and in verse 14. **Young dromedaries**—Heb. *sons of the rammachim*. The word **רַמְּכִים** is found only here,

and is of doubtful meaning. According to Gesenius and Fürst, it means *mares*. But, as it has the masculine termination, others understand it to mean *stallions*. Rawlinson gives it the more general sense of *highbred steeds*. Perhaps the best version of all the words would be, *riders of the swift coursers, the royal steeds, offspring of the thorough-breds*.

**11. The king granted the Jews . . . to stand for their life**—But would not the Jews have defended themselves without any such order from the king? They could expect nothing but death at the worst, and every human instinct would have prompted them to have fought with all energy for their lives and their families. True; but without special grant from the king they would not have been allowed to arm and prepare themselves for self-defence at all. Any movement looking to a general preparation to stand on the defensive would have been watched by the rulers of the provinces, and crushed at its

young dromedaries: **11** Wherein the king granted the Jews which *were* in every city to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all the power of the people and province that would assault them, *both* little ones and women, and *'to take the spoil of them for a prey,* **12**<sup>m</sup> Upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, *namely*, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month

<sup>l</sup> See chapter 9. 10, 15, 16.—<sup>m</sup> Chapter 3. 13, &c.; 9. 1.

very inception as an act of treason. A spasmodic defence with empty hands would have accomplished nothing; but the king's decree gave the Jews authority to arm themselves with the sword. Chap. ix, 5. Observe, the Jews were not authorized by this second edict to take the offensive, and destroy whom they would, but only to defend themselves when any **would assault them**. There would be no slaughter at all if their enemies did not first attack the Jews. This again obviates the objection often urged against the credibility of this history, that no king would have authorized such a civil war throughout all his dominions. The probability was, that when the Jews were thus permitted to arm themselves and stand on the defensive, there would be no conflict at all. But the result showed that so bitter was the hatred of the heathen towards the Jews, that in many parts of the empire they endeavoured, in spite of all the danger, to destroy the Jewish population. The result was the slaughter of seventy-five thousand men, (chap. ix, 16,) besides those that fell in Shushan. All arguments based on an assumption of what ordinary rulers would have done or would not have done are futile and foolish when dealing with such a king as Xerxes. **Little ones and women**—These would hardly be expected to **assault** the Jews, but Mordecai would make his letters as broad and comprehensive as those of Haman. Compare chap. iii, 13. This clause authorized the Jews to carry their vengeance to the wives and children of those who assaulted them, for their enemies would not spare the Jewish wife and child

Adar. **13** "The copy of the writing for a commandment to be given in every province *was* published unto all people, and that the Jews should be ready against that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. **14** So the posts that rode upon mules and camels went out, being hastened and pressed on by the king's commandment. And the decree was given at Shushan the palace. **15** And Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue and

white, and with a great crown of gold, and with a garment of fine linen and purple: and the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad. **16** The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. **17** And in every province, and in every city, whithersoever the king's commandment and his decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a good day. And many of the people of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews fell upon them.

*n* Chap. 3, 14, 15.—5 Hebrew, *revealed*.—*o* Or, *violet*.—*p* See chap. 3, 15; Prov. 29, 2. *p* Ps. 97, 11.

*q* 1 Sam. 25, 8; chap. 9, 19, 22.—*r* Ps. 18, 43. *s* Gen. 35, 5; Exod. 15, 16; Deut. 2, 25; 11, 25 chap. 9, 2.

**14. That rode upon mules and camels**—Rather, *riders of the swift coursers, the royal steeds*. See note on verse 10. **Being hastened**—Though there were eight months yet before the month of Adar, it was important that this counter decree should be published throughout the empire as speedily as possible. Thus the enemies would be duly admonished not to attempt any assault, and the Jews would have time to prepare themselves for self-defence.

**15. Mordecai went out from... the king**—This verse relates back to verses 1 and 2. Mordecai had been summoned into the royal presence, and there promoted to the high office made vacant by the fall of Haman. Having been invested with the insignia of office, and clothed with authority as chief minister, he went forth to attend to the duties of his new position. **Royal apparel of blue and white**—State garments, such as became the grand vizier; royal robes of royal colours. Compare note on chap. i, 6. **A great crown of gold**—The word here rendered *crown* is עטרה, *atarah*, a coronet. Only a very exalted prince or courtier could go thus adorned. When Mordecai was honoured for his loyal service to the king, the horse on which he rode was decked with a royal crown. Note on chap. vi, 7. Now Mordecai himself is made to wear a coronet. **A garment of fine linen**—Or, *a mantle of byssus*. **Shushan rejoiced**—As it had been previously "perplexed" and saddened. See chap. iii, 15, note. It was now felt by the great majority of the people that a most wicked and pernicious edict was virtually frustrated.

**16. The Jews had light**—The *light* (אורה) of hope and salvation broke in upon their dark prospects, filling them with gladness and joy, and securing them honour and respect from many of the heathen.

**17. Many... became Jews**—Divine Providence had so signally interposed that all thoughtful minds were profoundly impressed, and not a few became proselytes, and embraced Judaism as the true religion. Some of these proselytes may, perhaps, have been influenced more by the "fear of Mordecai," (chap. ix, 3,) than by profound religious convictions; but that a general fear of the Jews fell upon them is clearly stated. Many might naturally have feared that if they remained only ostensibly enemies of the Jews, the vengeance of the latter would be likely to come upon them. And so they thought to secure themselves by professing Judaism.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE TWO DAYS OF VENGEANCE, 1-19.

The days, and weeks, and months passed swiftly by. The dreadful thirteenth of Adar was at hand. Those were days of most intense anxiety and suspense throughout the Persian empire. Two royal edicts were before the people—one authorizing a general massacre of the Jews, and the seizing of their property, the other empowering the Jews to take all needful measures for self-defence. These edicts were of equal authority. Strange spectacle! Possible only under that Medo-Persian government, where the

## CHAPTER IX.

**N**OW <sup>a</sup>in the twelfth month, that <sup>is</sup>, the month Adar, on the thirteenth day of the same, <sup>b</sup>when the king's commandment and his decree drew near to be put in execution, in the day that the enemies of the Jews hoped to have power over them; though it was turned to the contrary, that the Jews <sup>c</sup>had rule over them that hated them; **2** The Jews <sup>d</sup>gathered themselves together in their cities throughout all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus,

<sup>a</sup> Chap. 8. 12.—<sup>b</sup> Chap. 3. 13.—<sup>c</sup> 2 Sam. 22. 41.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 8. 11; verse 16.—<sup>e</sup> Psal. 71. 13, 24.  
—<sup>f</sup> Chap. 8. 12.

foolish notion had become a law, that no decree signed by the royal signet can be reversed or changed. Meanwhile warlike preparations had been making, and in many cities it was evident there would be shedding of blood. For the Jews' enemies were in many quarters so bitter in their hatred that they could not rest. They hesitated not to risk life and peace and property for the sake of being avenged on a race whose customs and religion they despised. Notable is the fact that men in whom such hatred dwells are not awed by admonitions. The fall of Haman, the elevation and growing influence of Mordecai, and the general "fear of the Jews" that began to prevail, only imbibittered their rage, and seemed to urge them on with mad frenzy to deeds of violence and blood.

**1. It was turned to the contrary**—So the providence of God will ever overturn and bring to naught the counsels of the wicked.

**2. No man could withstand them**—One explanation of their power and success is given in the next sentence, **for the fear of them fell upon all people.** A general terror spread from a feeling that the Jews were the special favourites of the most high God; and while this feeling disheartened and unnerved their enemies, it gave inspiration and power to the Jews.

Rawlinson thinks that the Jews did not remain wholly on the defensive, but sometimes commenced the attack. We may, indeed, very naturally suppose that Jewish antipathy and anger

to lay hand on such as <sup>e</sup>sought their hurt; and no man could withstand them; for 'the fear of them fell upon all people. **3** And all the rulers of the provinces, and the lieutenants, and the deputies, and <sup>1</sup>officers of the king, helped the Jews; because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. **4** For Mordecai *was* great in the king's house, and his fame went out throughout all the provinces: for this man Mordecai <sup>g</sup>waxed greater and greater. **5** Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the

<sup>1</sup> Heb. *those which did the business that belonged to the king.*—<sup>g</sup> 2 Sam. 3. 1; 1 Chron. 11. 9; Prov. 4. 18.

would, at least in some cases, lead them to assault their foes, but of this we have no evidence in this history. The nearest approach to it is Esther's request in verse 13. where see note.

**3. The rulers of the provinces**—Called *princes* in the common version of chap. i, 3, though the Hebrew word is the same in each passage. **Lieutenants**—Satraps. See on Ezra viii, 36. **Deputies**—Governors or prefects. See on Ezra v, 3. **Officers of the king**—Hebrew, *Doers of the business that pertained to the king.* See note on chap. iii, 9. **Helped the Jews**—To what extent is not stated. They probably facilitated the Jews in their preparations to defend themselves. **Because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them**—They were men of artful policy, careful to keep in favour with the highest minister of the royal court; and because the prime minister was now a Jew, they feared to take sides with the Jews' enemies.

**4. Mordecai waxed greater and greater**—This fact all the more commanded for him the respect and reverence of the various rulers of the empire. He was a wise statesman, a careful and prudent officer, and his manner combined such dignity and grace, and so won the confidence of the king, that his name became known through all the empire, and all thoughtful princes in the provinces at once concluded that it would not be safe or wise to place themselves in any kind of opposition to him.

**5 The Jews smote . . . with . . . the sword**—Hence we see that they

sword, and slaughter, and destruction, and did <sup>2</sup> what they would unto those that hated them. **6** And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men. **7** And Parshandatha, and Dalphon, and Aspatha, **8** And Poratha, and Adalia, and Aridatha, **9** And Parmashta, and Arisai, and Aridai, and Vajezatha, **10** <sup>h</sup> The ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews, slew they; <sup>i</sup> but on the spoil laid they not their hand. **11** On that day the number of those that were slain in Shushan the palace <sup>3</sup> was brought

<sup>2</sup> Heb. *according to their will*.—*h* Chap. 5. 11; Job 18. 19; 27. 13-15; Psa. 21. 10.—*i* See chap. 8. 11.

had armed themselves with weapons of war, and were thus prepared, in case of attack, to retaliate with **slaughter and destruction**. No doubt when they were assailed they avenged themselves by a most fearful retaliation. **Did what they would unto those that hated them**—Carried their work of retaliation to whatsoever extent they desired. But it does not appear that in any city or province the Jews themselves began the work of war. The hatred of their enemies always commenced the slaughter by an attack upon them.

**6. In Shushan the palace the Jews slew... five hundred**—Shushan the palace is here evidently to be taken in the sense of the place or city of the palace, equivalent to *in* or *at Shushan*, as in verse 15. It is not to be supposed that the work of slaughter was carried on within the palace itself.

**7-9. Parshandatha . . . Vajezatha**—These names of Haman's ten sons are written in Hebrew MSS. in perpendicular columns, and it is said that the reader in the synagogue is required to pronounce them all at one breath. The Targum says they were all suspended, one above another, upon one cross, fifty cubits high, which Mordecai had prepared for the purpose. In the Masoretic text the letters **ן** and **ש**, in the names of **Parshandatha** and **Parmashta**, are written in smaller form than the rest, and in the last name, **Vajezatha**, the **י** is written large, and the **י** small—all which, perhaps, represents some mys-

before the king. **12** And the king said unto Esther the queen, The Jews have slain and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the palace, and the ten sons of Haman; what have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? now <sup>4</sup> what is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: or what <sup>5</sup> is thy request further? and it shall be done. **13** Then said Esther, If it please the king, let it be granted to the Jews which <sup>6</sup> are in Shushan to do to morrow also <sup>7</sup> according unto this day's decree, and <sup>8</sup> let Haman's ten sons <sup>9</sup> be hanged upon the gallows.

<sup>3</sup> Hebrew, *came*.—*k* Chap. 5. 6; 7. 2.—*l* Chap. 8. 11.—<sup>4</sup> Hebrew, *let men hang*.—*m* 2 Sam. 21. 6, 9.

tic Rabbinical conceit. Most of these names are of Persian origin, a fact which has great weight in showing the genuineness of the Book of Esther.

**10. On the spoil laid they not their hand**—The king's decree granted them, as it had done their enemies, the right to the spoils, (chaps. iii, 13; viii, 11,) but they showed that they had no desire to enrich themselves by the goods of their fallen foes.

**12. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces**—A question implying that much greater destruction must have prevailed elsewhere. Here in Shushan they have slain five hundred; what multitudes, then, are likely to have been slain in the provinces!

**13. To do to morrow also according unto this day's decree**—This request of Esther has been pronounced the offspring of a bloodthirsty vengeance, and desire to have another day for the butchery of enemies. But what was *this day's decree* which the queen desired to be continued another day? Merely "to stand for their life" against all that would assault them. See note on verse 2, and chap. viii, 11. Hence we infer that the queen believed, or had reason to suspect, that the enemies of the Jews in Shushan would renew the attack upon the following day. So fearfully enraged were these enemies that they were likely to retaliate for their losses by an unauthorized continuance of the fight, and it was to secure her people against such an event Esther wisely made this

**14** And the king commanded it so to be done: and the decree was given at Shushan; and they hanged Haman's ten sons. **15** For the Jews that *were* in Shushan <sup>a</sup>gathered themselves together on the fourteenth day also of the month Adar, and slew three hundred men at Shushan; <sup>b</sup>but on the prey they

*n* Verse 2; chap. 8. 11.—*o* Verse 10.

request. This extension of the decree was to have effect only in **Shushan**, not in the provinces. **Let Haman's ten sons be hanged**—They had been already slain, (verse 10,) and now Esther would have their dead bodies impaled, in order to strike terror into the hearts of the Jews' enemies, and thus, as far as possible, prevent further strife and bloodshed.

**15. Slew three hundred men at Shushan**—Making, with the five hundred of the previous day, eight hundred slain at this capital city. We understand that, as Esther suspected, there were in Shushan many desperate persons who had resolved not to let the matter stop with the thirteenth of Adar, and so recommenced the fight on the next day. The result was the death of these three hundred men.

**16. And had rest from their enemies**—The position of these words in the middle of the verse is noticeably strange. There may be here some disarrangement of the text, or it may be, as Keil suggests, "that the narrator desired at once to point out how the matter ended." Such apparent disorder of the text is not always to be regarded as evidence of corruption by transcribers. The Hebrew writers are not always the best models of accuracy and perfection of literary style. **Seventy and five thousand**—"The slaughter of these seventy-five thousand shows," says Wordsworth, "that a very large number of their heathen enemies, who had been exasperated against the Jews, had prepared themselves for an attack upon them; and that, presuming upon their own numbers and forces, as compared with the Jews, they assaulted them in order to destroy and despoil them, and to enrich themselves with their property; and that the Jews made a vigorous resist-

laid not their hand. **16** But the other Jews that *were* in the king's provinces <sup>c</sup>gathered themselves together, and stood for their lives, and had rest from their enemies, and slew of their foes seventy and five thousand, <sup>d</sup>but they laid not their hands on the prey, **17** On the thirteenth day of the month Adar; and

*p* Verse 2; chap. 8. 11.—*q* See chap. 8. 11.

ance, and, by the help of God, routed their assailants with a great discomfiture. The slaughter was not the consequence of a vindictive spirit in the Jews but of the bitter animosity of their enemies; and it proves that the Jews would have been extinguished, as Haman's decree intended that they should be,) if God had not interfered to rescue them from destruction."

The same writer also records the two following inferences from the history of this terrible slaughter: 1) "It shows the recklessness of human life, even of their own subjects, which then prevailed among the sovereigns of most celebrated nations of the Eastern world, and it displays the ruinous consequences which would have resulted to human civilization if Ahasuerus (Xerxes) had been victorious at Salamis. If Greece had not triumphed in that struggle with Asia, Oriental ruthlessness and Oriental polygamy might have become dominant in the West, and greater difficulties would have obstructed the progress of civilization and Christianity. The Book of Esther reveals to us that the hand of God wrought for the deliverance of mankind at the straits of Salamis, and on the banks of the Asopus, at Plataea, as well as for the preservation of the Jews in the provinces of Persia." 2) "It also displays the unhappy consequences of that proud assumption of infallibility which was implied in the Medo-Persian maxim, that laws once enacted may never be repealed. Such a claim to the divine attribute of infallibility, whether it be made by Eastern potentates or Western pontiffs, shuts the door against repentance, and involves them in a perpetual necessity of erring, and is fraught with the most disastrous consequences to all who are under their sway."

on the fourteenth day <sup>a</sup> of the same rested they, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. **18** But the Jews that *were* at Shushan assembled together <sup>r</sup> on the thirteenth *day* thereof, and on the fourteenth thereof; and on the fifteenth *day* of the same they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. **19** Therefore the Jews of the villages, that dwelt in the unvalled towns, made the fourteenth day of the month Adar <sup>a</sup> a day of gladness and feasting, <sup>r</sup> and a good day, and of <sup>u</sup> sending portions one to another.

**20** And Mordecai wrote these things, and sent letters unto all the Jews that

<sup>11, 14.</sup> *in it.*—<sup>r</sup> Verses 11, 15.—<sup>s</sup> Deut. 16. 10, 12.—<sup>t</sup> Chap. 8. 17.—<sup>u</sup> Verse 22; Neh. 8. 10, 12.

**19. Therefore...the fourteenth day**—Because the Jews outside of Shushan did all their fighting on the thirteenth, and rested on the fourteenth, as stated in verse 17, *therefore* they made the latter day their day of feasting and joy; but the Jews in Shushan, having fought both on the thirteenth and fourteenth, made the fifteenth their feast day, verse 18. See also verse 21. **Jews of the villages**—Rather, *of the country places*, that is, as distinguished from those who dwelt at the capital, Shushan. They are further defined as those *that dwell in cities of the country*, (not **unvalled towns**, as our version has it, for some of these country towns may have had walls.) The writer of this was evidently a citizen of Shushan, and seems to have regarded the whole Persian empire outside of this capital city as country. **Sending portions**—Comp. Neh. viii, 10, note.

#### THE FEAST OF PURIM, 20–32.

So signal a deliverance, so marvelous a display of divine providence in behalf of the Jews as that delineated in this book, should be commemorated by an annual festival. This the sagacious Mordecai was not slow to see, and without delay he proceeded, in conjunction with Esther, to establish a new festival in Israel. To this measure, says the Talmud, eighty-five Jewish elders were opposed, but the queen and the prime minister of Persia had too much power and influence with

*were* in all the provinces of the king Ahasuerus, *both* nigh and far, **21** To establish *this* among them, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month Adar, and the fifteenth day of the same, yearly, **22** As <sup>v</sup> the days wherein the Jews rested from their enemies, and the month which was <sup>w</sup> turned unto them from sorrow to joy, and from mourning into a good day: that they should make them days of feasting and joy, and of <sup>x</sup> sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor. **23** And the Jews undertook to do as they had begun, and as Mordecai had written unto them;

<sup>v</sup> Chap. 3. 12, 13; Exod. 13. 3, 8; Psal. 103. 2; Isa. 12. 1, 2; 14. 3.—<sup>w</sup> Psal. 30. 11.—<sup>x</sup> Verse 19; Neh. 8. 10.

the people to be successfully opposed in establishing a festival of so much interest. The order and forms of its ancient observance are not recorded. On the modern custom, see note at the end of this chapter.

**20. Mordecai wrote these things**—Namely, the things or occurrences that transpired throughout the Persian empire on the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth of Adar. He wrote a report of the matter, as of something worthy to be chronicled for everlasting remembrance, and with this record he also **sent letters unto all the Jews** throughout the empire of Ahasuerus, proposing to them what is stated in the next two verses. Mordecai's official position in the Persian court enabled him to establish this festival as no other Jew could have done. He could issue orders with royal authority, and use the posts and agents of the empire to facilitate his plans. The statement here made, that Mordecai chronicled these events, and wrote letters to all the Jews, will not warrant the conclusion that he was the author of this Book of Esther, but is sufficient to show that such a conclusion is not therefore improbable.

**21. To establish this among them**—That is, to establish or appoint the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar as an annual feast of joy and gladness.

**23. Undertook to do as they had begun**—They heartily accepted and adopted Mordecai's proposal, and resolved to perpetuate what they had in

**24** Because Haman the son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, <sup>7</sup> had devised against the Jews to destroy them, and had cast Pur, that is, the lot, to <sup>8</sup> consume them, and to destroy them; **25** But <sup>7</sup> when Esther came before the king, he commanded by letters that his wicked device, which he devised against the Jews, should <sup>a</sup> return upon his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows. **26** Wherefore they called these days Purim after the name of <sup>a</sup> Pur. Therefore for all the words of <sup>b</sup> this letter, and of *that* which they had seen concerning this matter, and which had come unto them, **27** The Jews ordained, and

<sup>v</sup> Chap. 3. 6, 7.—<sup>6</sup> Hebrew, *crush*.—<sup>7</sup> Hebrew, *when she came*.—<sup>a</sup> Vers. 13, 14; chap. 7. 5, &c.; 8. 3, &c.—<sup>a</sup> Chap. 7. 10; Psa. 7. 16.—<sup>8</sup> That is, *lot*.—<sup>b</sup> Verse 20.

fact already begun, namely, resting, feasting, and rejoicing on the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar. Compare verses 17 and 18. Thus it seems Mordecai's letters (verse 20) contained a proposal for the Jews of the empire either to adopt or reject. They at once adopted the proposal, and "ordained" (ver. 27) the observance of these two days; whereupon Esther and Mordecai issued a "second letter," (verse 29,) which was more of the nature of an authoritative proclamation, confirming and establishing the feast of Purim.

**25. When Esther came before the king**—As the word *Esther* is not in the Hebrew text, and is not mentioned in the context, it is better to translate, *when it came before the king*, that is, when Haman's wicked device came before the king.

**26. Wherefore**—Namely, because Haman had cast *Pur*, or the lot, to fix on a lucky day for the destruction of the Jews. Verse 24. **They called these days Purim**—They evidently chose this name in ironical reference to the fact that Haman's lucky day (designated by *lot*) was so fortunate for his enemies, and so unlucky for himself. **The words of this letter**—Mordecai's letters mentioned in verse 20. **Which they had seen...and which had come unto them**—That is, all that they had themselves experienced of this event by being eyewitnesses and participators. The sentiment is Mor-

took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all such as <sup>c</sup> joined themselves unto them, so as it should not <sup>d</sup> fail, that they would keep these two days according to their writing, and according to their appointed time every year; **28** And that these days *should be remembered* and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city; and *that* these days of Purim should not <sup>e</sup> fail from among the Jews, nor the memorial of them <sup>f</sup> perish from their seed. **29** Then Esther the queen, <sup>g</sup> the daughter of Abihail, and Mordecai the Jew, wrote with <sup>h</sup> all authority, to confirm this <sup>i</sup> second letter of Purim. **30** And he sent the letters unto all the

<sup>c</sup> Chap. 8. 17; Isa. 56. 3, 6; Zech. 2. 11.—<sup>9</sup> Hebrew, *pass*.—<sup>10</sup> Hebrew, *pass*.—<sup>11</sup> Hebrew, *be ended*.—<sup>d</sup> Chap. 2. 15.—<sup>12</sup> Hebrew, *all strength*.—<sup>e</sup> See chap. 8. 10; verse 20.

decai's letters and their own personal knowledge of the matter prompted them to ordain the feast of Purim.

**27. According to their writing**—That is, according to the writing or letters which Mordecai had addressed to them. In his letter Mordecai had probably suggested some form for observing the days.

**28. Nor the memorial of them perish**—Great events are appropriately commemorated by significant monuments or institutions. Such memorials were the monumental stones and great altar at Jordan. Josh. iv, 7, 8, xxii, 10. But memorials of wood and stone will sooner or later perish, and those erected by the Jordan have long since disappeared. More permanent are such memorials as the Jewish Passover and Purim, and the Christian Eucharist. The continued observance of Purim to this day is a monumental proof of the truth of this history.

**29. Wrote with all authority**—With all the royal prestige and official dignity that would attach to a document proceeding from the queen and the grand vizier, and with all the binding force that it would also carry from being the written statement of what all the Jews had voluntarily decreed and enjoined upon themselves. Verses 27, 31. **To confirm this second letter**—That is, to give it the authority and force of law. It is called the *second letter* in reference to the previous

Jews, to 'the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with words of peace and truth,* **31** To confirm these days of Purim in their times *appointed*, according as Mordecai the Jew and Esther the queen had en-

joined them, and as they had decreed <sup>13</sup> for themselves and for their seed, the matters of 'the fastings and their cry. **32** And the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim; and it was written in the book.

*f Chap. 1. 1. — 13 Hebrew, for*

*their souls. — g Chap. 4. 3, 16.*

epistle of Mordecai, (verse 20,) and **letter of Purim**, because it established the feast of this name.

**31. The matters of the fastings and their cry**—Here it incidentally comes out that fasting and lamentation were also to be connected with the observance of Purim. The modern Jews observe the thirteenth of Adar, the anniversary of the day of slaughter, as a day of fasting, and call it *the fast of Esther*. This day of fasting and supplication is preliminary to the two days' feast that follows. It is not improbable that Esther herself may have proposed this fast, as a memorial of the grief that preceded their joy, and that the people approved and sanctioned it, and called it Esther's fast.

**32. The decree of Esther**—This is to be understood as the same with the letter of authority respecting Purim which is mentioned in verse 29, and was issued by both Esther and Mordecai. **It was written in the book**—The decree of Esther was recorded, and doubtless with it, also, an account of the institution of the feast of Purim. *The book* referred to here is somewhat uncertain. Some have thought the Book of Esther is intended; but the author of that book would hardly have designated his own work in this way. Bertheau and Keil think it was a book or treatise on the feast of Purim, which our author used in preparing his work, but which has not come down to us. This, however, is purely conjectural. It seems most natural, since we have in several other passages of this history a mention of the book of the chronicles of Media and Persia, (chap. ii, 23; vi, 1; x, 2,) to understand *the book* of this verse as that same book of State annals. The documents issued by Esther and Mordecai, establishing the feast of Purim, and perhaps, also, describing its origin and mode of ob-

servance, may well have been registered among the national chronicles.

The following account of the manner in which the feast of Purim is observed by the Jews of the present day is substantially from Smith's Dictionary of the Bible:—

The observance commences with *the fast of Esther*, (see note above on verse 31,) on the thirteenth of Adar. If the thirteenth falls upon a sabbath the fast is placed upon the Thursday preceding. As soon as the evening preceding the fourteenth of the month arrives candles are lighted in token of rejoicing, and the people assemble at the synagogue. The Book of Esther, written on a roll called *the Megillah*, is produced, and, after a short prayer, the reader proceeds to read it in a histrionic manner, aiming to suit his tones and gestures to the sense. When he pronounces the name of Haman the congregation exclaim, "May his name be blotted out," or, "Let the name of the ungodly perish," and at the same time the children present make a great noise with their hands, or with pieces of wood and stone. The names of Haman's ten sons are read with one breath, to signify that they were all hung at once. Comp. note on chap. ix, 7-9. When the roll is read through the whole congregation exclaim, "Cursed be Haman; blessed be Mordecai; cursed be Zeresh, the wife of Haman; blessed be Esther; cursed be all idolaters; blessed be all Israelites, and blessed be Harbonah, who hanged Haman." When this evening service is over all go home and partake of a simple repast. On the morning of the fourteenth all resort to the synagogue again; prayer is offered, and the passage of the law (Exod. xvii, 8-16) relating the destruction of the Amalekites is read, for the Jews regard Haman as a descendant of Agag the

## CHAPTER X.

**AND** the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land, and *upon* \* the isles of the sea. **2** And all the acts of his power

α Gen. 10. 5; Psa. 72. 10; Isa. 24. 15.

**Amalekite.** See note on chap. iii, 1. The roll of Esther is again read, as on the preceding evening. When the synagogue service is ended, all give themselves over to feasting and joy. Presents are sent to and fro among friends and relations, and liberal gifts are bestowed upon the poor. Games, dramatical entertainments, dancing, and music are resorted to, and every effort is made to promote general merriment and joy. Such festivities and joy are continued through the fifteenth also, but any Jews who desire may carry on their usual business during the days of this festival.

Josephus attests the observance of Purim in his day: "Even now all the Jews in the world celebrate these days with feasting, (ἐσπράζαντα,) sending portions to one another. . . . They celebrate the forementioned days, calling them *Phouraim*, (Φουραίους.)"—*Ant.*, xi, 13. A number of Jewish proverbs also attest the high esteem in which this feast was held: "The temple may fail, but Purim never." "The Prophets may fail, but not the Megillah." It was even said that no books would survive in the Messiah's kingdom but the Law and the Megillah.

## CHAPTER X.

## MORDECAI'S GREATNESS, 1-3.

**1. Ahasuerus laid a tribute**—This verse seems at first to have no special relevancy to the subject of this book. But as this additional chapter is evidently designed to point out the power and greatness of Mordecai, the writer introduces the subject by the mention of a fact which showed the vast resources of the monarch whose prime minister Mordecai was. When and for what special purpose the king levied the tribute here referred to we are not told. It seems to have been done after Mordecai became his prime minister, that is, after the twelfth year of

and of his might, and the declaration of the greatness of Mordecai, <sup>b</sup> whereunto the king <sup>a</sup> advanced him, *are they not* written in the book of the chronicles of

δ Chap. 8. 15; 9. 4.—1 Heb. *made him great.*

his reign, and many have thought that it was designed to replenish his exhausted treasury after his disastrous expedition against Greece. But a general tax for that purpose would have been taken before the twelfth year of his reign, and the king's language in chap. iii, 11, does not indicate a want of money. It is better, therefore, probably, to take the verb *laid* (נָשָׂא) as designating customary or habitual action—the king *was accustomed to lay* tribute, etc. **Isles of the sea**—It has been objected that Xerxes had no control of the islands of the Mediterranean after his war with Greece. This, however, is far from certain, for while many Greek islands revolted, Cyprus, Aradus, and the Isle of Tyre, and probably others, still remained in allegiance to the great king. But even had all his isles revolted, it would have been no strange thing for such a ruler as Xerxes to call for tribute where he had no power to collect it.

**2. Declaration of the greatness of Mordecai**—A distinct statement of the power and authority to which Mordecai had been advanced by the king. The Hebrew word rendered *declaration* occurs elsewhere only at chap. iv, 7, where it is rendered *sum*. See note there. An accurate record of Mordecai's elevation to power was made in the same book that contained the record of all the acts of the power and might of Ahasuerus, and this fact was no small tribute to the honour and glory of Mordecai. This book of records is here called **the book of the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia**, and was, probably, identical with that mentioned in chap. ii, 23; vi, 1; ix, 32. Mordecai's acts were chronicled with those of the kings of the Medo-Persian empire. Elsewhere in this book, where Media and Persia are mentioned, (chap. i, 3; xiv, 18, 19,) Persia is always mentioned first; but here the order is re-

the kings of Media and Persia? **3** For Mordecai the Jew *was* next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews,

c Gen. 41. 40; 2 Chron. 23. 7.

versed, because mention is made of records in which the Median chronicles preceded those of Persia. Compare note on chap. i, 3.

**3. For**—Introducing the reason why the acts of Mordecai and Ahasuerus were recorded in the same book. **Next unto king Ahasuerus**—His grand vizier, or prime minister. Comp. chap. viii, 2, 9, 15; ix, 3, 4. **Great among the Jews**—Greatly distinguished and honoured by them. **Accepted of the multitude**—Or, *acceptable to the multitude*. The great mass of his kindred were pleased with his acts and his honours. **Seeking the wealth of his people**—

and accepted of the multitude of his brethren, <sup>d</sup>seeking the wealth of his people, and speaking peace to all his seed.

d Neh. 2. 10; Psa. 122. 8, 9.

Literally, *seeking the good of his people*; that is, seeking in all practicable ways to promote their happiness and prosperity. **Speaking peace to all his seed**—That is, saluting with most cordial salutation all those of his race and nation whom he met. Mordecai was no proud and puffed up courtier, who disdained to mingle with or recognise his own race and kindred. Though made the prime minister of Persia, he was still known as **the Jew**, and he hesitated not to use his high office and power to promote, in all proper and lawful ways, the interests of the people of God.



Reputed Tomb of Mordecai and Esther at Hamadan.

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